

**NELSON IN LOVE
GRACA MACHEL: MY
LIFE WITH MANDELA**

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THE INDEPENDENT

Saturday 16 May 1998 70p (IR 70p) No 3,612

America mourns, as family war begins over the Sinatra millions



Frank Sinatra: Wanted his death marked extravagantly

By David Usborne
and Andrew Buncombe

EVEN as all of America stopped to mourn the death of Frank Sinatra, widely considered to be the most important and beloved entertainer of the century, a battle appeared to be brewing between his widow and three children over his \$200m (£120m) estate.

Sinatra, aged 82, died of a heart attack on Thursday night, at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles after months of failing health. It is

understood a private funeral will be held next week in Palm Springs, California, after a memorial service this weekend in Beverly Hills.

The entire United States indulged in an orgy of nostalgia on the airwaves for the man they called "Ol' Blue Eyes". The Empire State Building in New York is likely to be bathed in blue light and lights on The Strip in Las Vegas dimmed as a mark of respect.

Sinatra is said to have once told his children he wanted his death to be marked extravag-

antly. "I want fireworks lighting the sky, all the former presidents in attendance and I want Luciano Pavarotti singing 'Ave Maria'."

While his fourth wife, Barbara, and her three Sinatra step-children - Frank Jr, Tina and Nancy - were together at his bedside when he died, there were fears last night that feuds over the inheritance that have flared in recent years would quickly reignite.

One source close to the family said last night: "There has been an awful lot of fighting

over the past months and even in the last few days before his death I think it continued."

At stake is a business empire encompassing a fortune in record royalties, personal art collections and enterprises in property, music publishing and even a beer wholesaler, that is conservatively valued at \$200m. Arguments may also resurface over control of the company he formed to license his likeness and name. Called Sheffield Enterprises, it is headed by the 49-year-old Tina.

There have also been "singing" porcelain souvenir plates (embossed with a computer chip carrying the singer's voice) and other products said to be of questionable taste.

There was fury from the children in 1996 when Barbara forged ahead with a televised salute to Sinatra on his 80th birthday. When Barbara threw a 20th anniversary party for her husband in the same year, the children were all no-shows.

The fiercest of the fights in the past and potentially in the months ahead, centre on the

control of Sinatra's recordings. While the children were given control by the singer of his Reprise Records catalogue, spanning 1960 to 1988, Barbara has recently headed efforts to reissue his earlier songs.

For those hoping that in grief, the grievances can be buried, they might note that Barbara was recently quoted as telling a friend at the height of the Korbel champagne row:

"Why should I have any loyalty to Frank's ungrateful kids? If they want a fight they're going to get it."

Ulster faces 'No' vote catastrophe

By Kim Sengupta, David
McKittrick and Colin Brown

AN INCREASING Unionist swing towards a "no" vote is holding out the possibility of a disastrous result in next week's referendum on the Northern Ireland peace agreement.

A new opinion poll shows that 45 per cent of Unionists intend to vote no, while only 35 per cent are preparing to vote yes. With the count less than a week away, a further 20 per cent are undecided on whether to back the accord.

Even the declaration of an "unequivocal ceasefire" by the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the renegade grouping which has killed almost a dozen Catholics this year, did little to dispel the gloom in official circles about the referendum prospects.

The LVF said the move, announced by armed and masked men in Portadown, Co. Armagh, was to encourage a no vote in the referendum. The suspicion is, however, that it may have been prompted not by subtle political calculations but because the two dozen LVF prisoners are anxious to benefit from the early releases only available to inmates whose organisations have ceasefires.

Yesterday, Mr Blair spoke of public "revulsion" at the appearance of Stone, who was on temporary leave from prison whilst serving a life sentence for six murders and four attempted murders. A Downing Street spokesman agreed that it looked "very, very bad" and its timing, on the same evening as the Prime Minister's visit, was

ble to attack from the Reverend Ian Paisley and his anti-agreement camp.

Jeffrey Donaldson, one of David Trimble's Unionist MPs, delivered another blow to the Government by announcing that despite extensive contact with Tony Blair he is unable to support the agreement.

Mr Blair is planning a third visit to Northern Ireland next week in a final effort to raise support among the wavering Unionists for a "yes" vote.

Mr Blair's decision to add a third tour of the province on the eve of Thursday's poll underlines the anxieties at Downing Street over the failure to win over Unionists who have yet to decide how to vote.

The reason cited by most of those opposing the agreement was their objection to the early release of paramilitary prisoners. Their anxieties were reinforced by the presence at a Belfast rally of convicted Milltown Cemetery murderer Michael Stone. Indeed, embarrassingly for the Government, Stone's appearance at Ulster Hall coincided and overshadowed the Prime Minister's second visit to Belfast which was meant to give a fillip to the yes vote.

The "no" campaigners were increasingly in militant mood. A senior official of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party claimed that private soundings showed that those as yet undecided were increasingly drifting into the no camp. He added:

"The bubble burst, the yes campaign was built on froth and it is dissolving into nothing."



Newcastle United fans leaving the city's central station yesterday. Their team play Arsenal in today's FA Cup final at Wembley. Photograph: Raoul Dixon

Church leaders are attacked for putting Cup Final before poverty

By Paul Valley

THE Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Basil Hume are today condemned for deciding to attend the FA Cup Final rather than join tens of thousands of church activists expected in Birmingham to protest over Third World debt at the G8 summit.

The attendance at Wembley by the Arsenal fan Dr George Carey, and Newcastle supporter Cardinal Hume, is criticised by the editor of the *Church Times* as a "missed opportunity to show the country what real sacrifice means".

The two were invited but "pledged a prior engagement", a spokesman

said. Writing today in *The Independent*, Paul Handley says that with half the world in physical peril and the other half in spiritual, "spending a dull afternoon in Birmingham is a small price to pay".

Church spokesmen denied that the prelates had their priorities wrong. "Dr Carey has given two major speeches on debt and has just come back from Uganda where debt was at the top of the agenda," said a spokesman for Lambeth Palace.

Cardinal Hume's office said that he had "taken a very active interest in the question of debt over several years. He organised a seminar in 1996 attended by the director of the

International Monetary Fund and he attended a meeting with the Chancellor in December... He personally contacted the presidents of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of all the G7 countries and asked them to make special appeals to their governments and went specially to Birmingham today to pray and speak about debt..."

A spokeswoman for the debt cancellation campaign Jubilee 2000 said that the archbishops "will be missed on the day but have both put in a lot of time to publicise the campaign".

Faith and Reason, page 20
Wright's chance,
Time Out, page 28

...being
of sound mind,
I leave all my
worldly goods
to my hamster,
Simon.

Thousands flee in Indonesia panic

By Richard Lloyd Parry
of *Martha*

PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S government appeared paralysed yesterday as thousands of people fled violence in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, which has left hundreds dead.

Police and soldiers patrolled in trucks and armoured and most areas were tense but peaceful after riots on Thursday against the 32-year Suharto regime.

Dozens of shops and supermarkets in eastern Jakarta were looted. In a burn-out shopping centre in the Kleden district, medical orderlies moved more than a hundred corpses of looted

ers and shop-keepers who were trapped when the upper floors were set alight.

Despite the chaos there was no official curfew and bandits threatened and robbed motorists travelling at night on the city's elevated expressways.

There was almost no commercial activity for the second consecutive day. Thousands of expatriates and ethnic Chinese Indonesians fled to the airport to escape a country which remains close to political and economic collapse.

A few hours after his early return from a visit to Egypt, members of the President's party, Golkar, demanded that

200 looters die as a city goes up in flames.

Mobs target the 'Jews of the East' - Pages 18 and 19

he eliminate "corruption, collusion and nepotism" and "return his mandate" as president. But senior generals expressed support for Mr Suharto and hinted at a crack-down. The opposition leaders Megawati Sukarnoputri and Amien Rais

failed to turn up for an appearance with activists demanding reform and an end to Mr Suharto's rule.

The Information Minister, Aliwi Dahlan, repeated a statement by Mr Suharto that he would step down "if the people have no confidence in me". But his son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto, denied speculation that the armed forces were divided in their support for the President and promised on national television to act forcefully against rioters.

The government said it was reversing a rise in the cost of fuel oil, which provoked riots last week. Trading in the financial

markets ceased and many foreign companies closed their offices and flew out employees and their families.

Staff of the International Monetary Fund, whose austerity programme contributed to the unrest, left in a chartered plane. The British embassy advised citizens "to consider leaving", and British Airways laid on an extra flight to Malaysia. Other countries, including the US, began evacuating citizens on chartered flights.

The Malaysian government, fearing a wave of Indonesian boat-people, increased the number of patrols in the Strait of Malacca.

In brief

Justice attack

Stephen Lawrence's friend Duwayne Brooks yesterday hit out at a system which allowed racists to "attack and go free" while treating victims as "criminals".

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£400,000 award

A woman who had unnecessary surgery after doctors wrongly diagnosed that her child had died in the womb was awarded £400,000 damages yesterday.

Page 3

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT explores the fascinating world of wills. Daire Brehan talks to people who have had their lives changed, not always for the better, by a single piece of paper.

Monday mornings from 18 May, 11.02 - 11.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92.95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Aaronovitch: 'The most positive role model for men now is the male stripper'

Moore: 'I don't have a problem with maleness ... You cannot be such a little flower'



David Aaronovitch (left) and Suzanne Moore: At odds over what makes men happy or miserable in a women's world

Sex war: now it's personal

DA: The thing that really had the steam coming out of my ears was your throwaway remark that "the repertoire of male sexual behaviour is so limited, I could almost feel sorry for them". If I were to apply that generally to women, not only would I invite a shitload of trouble but it would be unacceptable and wilfully wrong.

SM: You know it is so funny that this is the one thing that got to you.

DA: But it is this denigration of everything that is male. There has been a gender revolution over the last 20 years and with it an enormous increase in the success of women in the workplace; of girls in school, increases in the number of girls with degrees. All without a concomitant increase in success for boys. And it doesn't help that your generalisations denigrate every aspect of masculinity and male sexuality.

SM: You know if I was as sensitive as you I would be dead by now. If you don't like generalisations about your gender how do you think I feel? I live in the world where I'm surrounded by generalisations about women all the time. And there is no evidence that it is not predictable to be in a position of power and want to be spanked.

DA: Yes there is. The vast majority of men just don't get spanked.

SM: I don't know that.

DA: But you talk as if you do.

SM: I just don't talk as if equali-

All week, two of The Independent's columnists have been warring across the gender divide. In the wake of reports that new men are miserable in a women's world and that old men are happy to justify their extra-marital indulgences, the insults flew on our comment pages. So we locked Suzanne Moore and David Aaronovitch together in a small room. And let them slug it out....

ty has already happened. The behaviour of men still has to change and they have to be forced to change. Why else would they give up their positions of power?

DA: Now you're talking as we're where we were 20 years ago. I despair of finding any model of male behaviour that is acceptable to you.

SM: I don't have a problem with maleness. If I make a flip remark about men, its effect is not to denounce the whole of male behaviour.

DA: Yes it does, you see.

SM: No it doesn't. You cannot be such a little flower.

DA: It's not a question of floweriness, or whatever, although maybe flowers are one thing we could be that would make us less predictable.

Look at popular culture as represented on television: you say, "I

can't get enough Oprah"; I say "Oprah is driving out proper discussion" – I don't mind having both, but at the moment everything is going in the Oprah direction. Everything is going in the confessional direction.

Everything associated with old male notions of serious debate is tedious or boring and is not immediate enough.

SM: But you're talking about television. In the real world men are still in charge of big companies, still in charge of newspapers, still in charge of institutions. Where is this feminist, Oprah debate? Certainly not in parliament.

DA: Yes it is, it's Clinton's "I feel your pain". It's the approach for the women voters: "feel the pain, forget the policies". There is an inordinate amount of that around, the men in

power wondering how they can appeal to women.

SM: And what's wrong with that?

DA: It is good, but they are driving out some of the discussions and debates that you need to retain, despite their seriousness or pomposity. And girls can talk that language because they are more socialised than boys – there is even some discussion about whether there is some sort of genetic reason for them being socialised better ...

SM: A genetic reason for men being crap you mean.

DA: Yeah, for them being less socialised. You put it in terms of them being crap, but to say that: "what they are is crap" is a bit of a problem for the boys.

SM: But the socialisation of men

is not producing the kinds of men we will need for the 21st century.

DA: Ah, but the research tends to show us that one of the cardinal factors which helps boys socialise is the presence of a mother in the home. Now what are you going to say about that? To achieve, these boys need their mum!

SM: No! because there is plenty of other research that says you have this generation of useless boys because they don't have a father figure around. And clearly, mothers aren't going to stay at home, so instead of saying that's the way to do it, you have to say what else can we do?

DA: Exactly. You have to say – for instance, we have to have a positive notion of male sexuality.

SM: (spluttering) What do you think we have – it's stuffed down our throat all the time, in magazines, on television – to be a man is to have as many women as possible.

DA: Our soap operas I see an almost purely negative version of male sexuality, on documentary soaps I see an almost purely negative ... They're all bastards or wimps, one or the other. We have no positive way of talking about men at the moment – the most positive role model for men now is the male stripper.

SM: Why are you asking me to be positive about men – that's not my job, I've got better things to do than be positive about male sexuality ... Get some men to do it.

NHS trust pays £400,000 to woman over baby-scan error

A CALIFORNIAN businesswoman who "fell to pieces" following unnecessary surgery after doctors wrongly diagnosed that her second child had died in the womb yesterday settled her High Court damages action for \$400,000.

Susan Hagstrom's daughter Christen was born healthy in March 1994 but only after her mother had endured months of worry that the drugs, X-ray and the D & C evacuation procedure she had undergone had damaged the unborn baby.

Mrs Hagstrom, 39, of Gar-

den Grove, California, repeatedly broke down as she told Mr Justice Blofeld in London that she was petrified she would give birth to a deformed child.

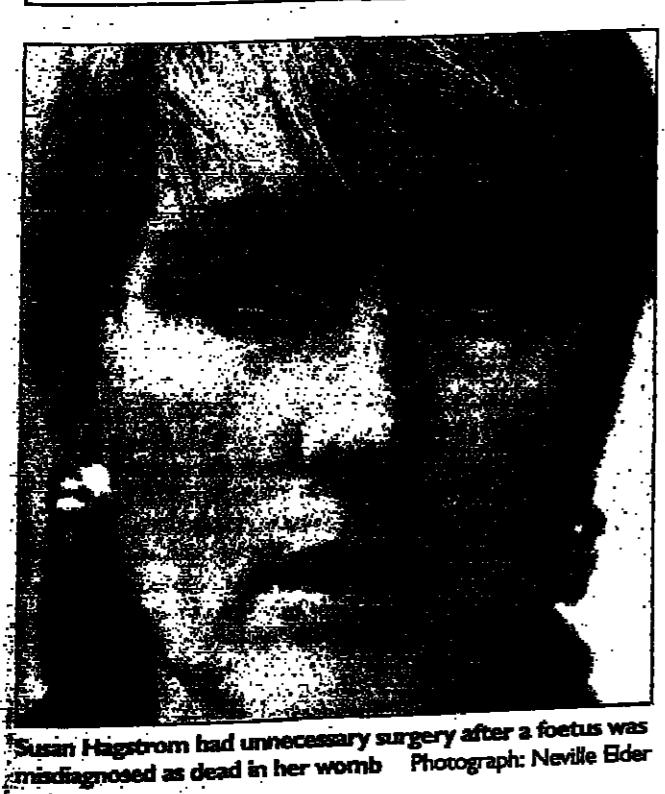
She needed further surgery to repair her uterus and small bowel, which were perforated during the procedure, and she still suffered from abdominal pain.

Continuing psychiatric problems, which she said amounted to post traumatic stress disorder, had forced her to resign as marketing director for a California real estate company in

December 1994 and she had not worked since. She said that it was all she could do during the day to take Christen and her elder sister, Danielle, eight, to school.

Judgment had already been entered in favour of Mrs Hagstrom against Royal Surrey County and St Luke's Hospitals NHS Trust over the negligent treatment she received in August 1993 when a scan at eight weeks' gestation wrongly suggested the absence of a foetal heartbeat.

Today, five days into a hear-



Susan Hagstrom had unnecessary surgery after a foetus was misdiagnosed as dead in her womb. Photograph: Neville Elder

This week

"A very rough guide to Jerusalem (1841 Edition)"

CATHEDRAL OF DREAMS is the remarkable story of Deborah Ransom and her missionary father who travelled to Jerusalem in 1841, to found a church in the Holy Land. Saturday afternoon, 16 May, 2.30 – 3.00.

"Sunday opening in Ambridge."

Is nothing sacred?"

THE ARCHERS. In addition to the omnibus, there is now an extra episode on Sundays. So now you don't have to wait until Mondays to find out who's doing what to whom in Ambridge. Every Sunday evening, 7.02 – 7.15.

"I think life will continue just fine."

IT'S JUST THAT I'LL MISS IT SO." BEFORE I SAY GOODBYE is Ruth Picardie's honest, funny and moving account of what it's like to be dying of cancer when you've got everything to live for. Weekday mornings for one week from Monday 18 May, 9.45 – 10.00.

"...being of sound mind, I leave all my worldly goods to my hamster, Simon."

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT explores the fascinating world of wills. Daire Breihan talks to people who have had their lives changed, not always for the better, by a single piece of paper. Monday mornings from 18 May, 11.02 – 11.30.

"Dear Diary, got up. Went for a walk. Founded acting dynasty."

THE AFTERNOON PLAY, "Roy and Daisy," stars Corin Redgrave and his wife Kika Markham in the true story of Corin's grandparents and their colourful life in Edwardian theatre. Monday, 18 May, 2.15 – 3.00.

"Don't read Nick Hornby's new book."

THE LATE BOOK continues with Nick Hornby's "About A Boy," the story of Will, a serial seducer with a novel chat up line and Marcus, a kid with more than enough adolescent angst. Weekday evenings, from Monday 18 May, 24.30 – 24.45.

"Hear Alan Davies bring something rare to situation comedy. Humour."

THE ALAN DAVIES SHOW is a new series starring the man himself. He's got problems with his girlfriend, his career and the toilet. Hear how it all pans out. Wednesday evenings, from 20 May, 6.30 – 7.00.

"Life, the universe and everything."

(Programmes don't come any bigger.) LEADING EDGE. In the first of a new series Geoff Watts examines the latest theories on the formation of galaxies and the glue that holds all matter together. Thursday evenings from 21 May, 9.02 – 9.30.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95 FM & 198 LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

The one man in America who

'He seemed now to be the embodiment of the fully emancipated male, perhaps the only one in America.' That was how the American-Italian writer **Gay Talese** (left)



described Frank Sinatra at 50.

The year was 1965, Beatlemania was at its height, but Sinatra, product of everything that was pre-Sixties, was at the height of his powers; he was worshipped and he was feared. In this piece, first published in the American edition of 'Esquire', Talese captures him with a vividness and knowingness that has rarely been equalled

FRANK SINATRA, holding a glass of bourbon in one hand and a cigarette in the other, stood in a dark corner of the bar between two attractive but fading blondes who sat waiting for him to say something. But he said nothing; he had been silent during much of the evening, except that now, in this private club in Beverly Hills, he seemed even more distant, staring out through the smoke and semi-darkness into a large room beyond the bar, where dozens of young couples sat huddled around small tables or twisted in the centre of the floor to the clamorous clang of folk-rock music blaring from the stereo. The two blondes knew, as did Sinatra's four male friends who stood nearby, that it was a bad idea to force conversation upon him when he was in this mood of sullen silence, a mood that had hardly been uncommon during this first week of November, a month before his fiftieth birthday.

Sinatra had been working on a film that he now disliked, could not wait to finish; he was tired of all the publicity attached to his dating the 20-year-old Mia Farrow; he was angry that a CBS television documentary of his life, to be shown in two weeks, was reportedly prying into his privacy, even speculating on his possible friendship with Mafia leaders; he was worried about his starring role in an hour-long NBC show entitled *Sinatra - A Man And His Music*, which would require that he sing 18 songs with a voice that at this particular moment, just a few nights before the taping was to begin, was weak and sore and uncertain. Sinatra was ill. He was the victim of an ailment so common that most people would consider it trivial. But when it gets to Sinatra it can plunge him into a state of anguish, deep depression, panic, even rage. Frank Sinatra had a cold.

Sinatra with a cold is Picasso without paint. Ferrari without fuel - only worse. For the common cold robs Sinatra of that unimpressive jewel, his voice, cutting into the core of his confidence, and it not only affects his own psyche but also seems to cause a kind of psychosomatic nasal drip within dozens of people who work for him, drink with him, love him, depend on him for their own welfare and stability. A Sinatra with a cold can, in a small way, send vibrations through the entertainment industry and beyond, as surely as a President of the United States, suddenly sick, can shake the national economy.

For Frank Sinatra was now involved with many things involving many people - his own film company, his record company, his private airline, his missile-parts firm, his real-estate holdings across the nation, his personal staff of 75 - which are only a portion of the power he is and has come to represent. He seemed now to be also the embodiment of the fully emancipated male, perhaps the only one in America, the man who can do anything he wants, anything, can do it because he has the money, the energy, and no apparent guilt. In an age when the very young seem to be taking over, protesting and picketing and demanding change, Frank Sinatra survives as a national phenomenon, one of the few pre-war products to withstand the test of time.

But now, standing at this bar in Beverly Hills, Sinatra had a cold, and

he continued to drink quietly and he seemed miles away in his private world, not even reacting when suddenly the stereo in the other room switched to a Sinatra song, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning". It is a lovely ballad that he first recorded 10 years ago, and it now inspired many young couples who had been sitting, tired of twisting, to get up and move slowly around the dance floor, holding one another very close, Sinatra's intonation, precisely clipped, yet full and flowing, gave a deeper meaning to the simple lyrics "In the wee small hours of the morning, while the whole wide world is fast asleep, you lie awake, and think about the girl..."

It was like so many of his classics, a song that evoked loneliness and sensuality, and when blended with the dim light and the alcohol and nicotine and late-night needs, it became a kind of airy aphrodisiac. Undoubtedly the words from this song, and others like it, had put millions in the mood; it was music to make love by, and doubtless much love had been made by it all over America at night in cars, while the batteries burned down, in cottages by the lake, on beaches during balmy summer evenings, in secluded parks and exclusive penthouses and furnished rooms, in cabin cruisers and cabs and cabanas - in all places where Sinatra's songs could be heard were these words that warmed women, wooed and won them, snipped the final thread of inhibition and gratified the male egos of ungrateful lovers. Two generations of men had been the beneficiaries of such ballads, for which they were eternally in his debt, for which they may eternally hate him. Nevertheless, here he was, the man himself, in the early hours of the morning in Beverly Hills, out of range.

Now Sinatra said a few words to the blondes. Then he turned from the bar and began to walk towards the pool room. One of Sinatra's other men friends moved in to keep the girls company. Brad Dexter, who had been standing in the corner talking to some other people, now followed Sinatra.

The room cracked with the clack of billiard balls. There were about a dozen spectators in the room, most of them young men who were watching Leo Durocher shoot against two other aspiring hustlers who were not very good. This private drinking club has among its membership many actors, directors, writers, models, nearly all of them a good deal younger than Sinatra or Durocher and much more casual in the way they dress for the evening. Many of the young women, their long hair flowing loosely below their shoulders, wore tight pants and very expensive sweaters; and a few of the young men wore blue or green velvet shirts with high collars, and narrow, tight pants and Italian loafers.

It was obvious from the way Sinatra looked at these people in the pool room that they were not his style, but he leaned back against a high stool that was against the wall, holding his drink in his right hand, and said nothing, just watched Durocher slam the billiard balls back and forth. The younger men in the room, accustomed to seeing Sinatra at this club, treated him with deference, although they said nothing offensive. They were a cool young group, very California-cool and casual, and one of the coolest

seemed to be a little guy, very quick of movement, who had a sharp profile, pale blue eyes, light brown hair, and square eyeglasses. He wore a pair of brown corduroy slacks, a green shaggy-dog Shetland sweater, a tan suede jacket, and Game Warden boots, for which he had recently paid \$60.

Frank Sinatra, leaning against the stool, sniffing a bit from his cold, could not take his eyes off the Game Warden boots. Once, after gazing at them for a few moments, he turned away; but now he was focused on them again. The owner of the boots, who was just standing in them watching the pool game, was named Harlan Ellison; he was a writer who had just completed work on a screenplay, *The Oscar*.

Finally Sinatra could not contain himself. "Hey," he yelled in his slightly harsh voice that still had a soft, sharp edge. "Those Italian boots?"

"No," Ellison said.

"Spanish?"

"No."

"Are they English boots?"

"Look, I dunno, man," Ellison shot back, frowning at Sinatra, then turning away again.

The pool room was suddenly silent. Leo Durocher, who had been poised behind his cue and was bent low, just froze in that position for a second. Nobody moved. Then Sinatra moved away from the stool and walked with that slow, arrogant swagger of his toward Ellison, the hard tap of Sinatra's shoes the only sound in the room. Then, looking down at Ellison with a slightly raised eyebrow and a tricky little smile, Sinatra asked: "You expecting a storm?"

Harlan Ellison moved a step to the side. "Look, is there any reason why you're talking to me?"

"I don't like the way you're dressed," Sinatra said.

"Hate to shake you up," Ellison said, "but I dress to suit myself."

Now there was some rumbling in the room, and somebody said, "C'mon, Harlan, let's get out of here," and Leo Durocher made his pool shot and said, "Yeah, c'mon."

But Ellison stood his ground.

Sinatra said: "What do you do?"

"I'm a plumber," Ellison replied.

"No, no, he's not," another young man quickly yelled from across the table. "He wrote *The Oscar*."

"Oh, yeah," Sinatra said, "well I've seen it, and it's a piece of crap."

"That's strange," Ellison said, "because they haven't even released it yet."

"Well, I've seen it," Sinatra repeated.

"And it's a piece of crap."

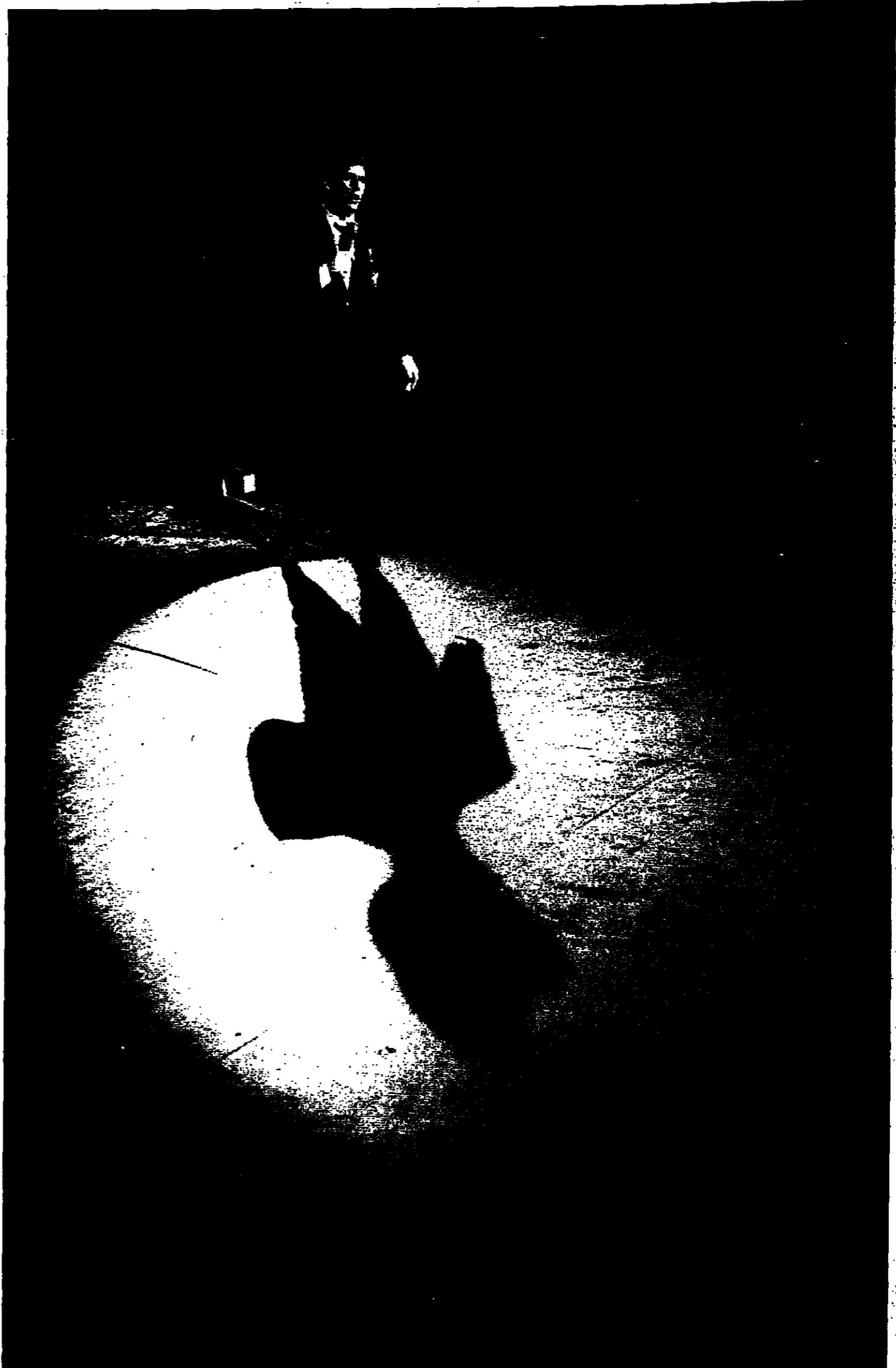
Now Brad Dexter, very anxious, very big opposite the small figure of Ellison, said "C'mon, kid, I don't want you in this room."

"Hey," Sinatra interrupted Dexter, "can't you see I'm talking to this guy?"

Dexter was confused. Then his whole attitude changed, and Dexter's voice went soft and he said to Ellison, almost with a plea, "Why do you persist in tormenting me?"

The whole scene was becoming ridiculous, and it seemed that Sinatra was only half-serious, perhaps just reacting out of sheer boredom or inner despair; at any rate, after a few more exchanges Harlan Ellison left the room. By this time the word had got out to those on the dance floor about the Sinatra-Ellison exchange.

Prior to his cold, Sinatra had been very excited about this show; he saw here an opportunity not only to appeal to those nostalgic, but also to communicate his talent to some rock'n'rollers; in a sense, he was battling the Beatles. The press releases



Sinatra steps out of the shadows during rehearsals in 1961

Photograph: Dennis Stock/Magnum

and somebody went to look for the manager of the club. But somebody else said that the manager had already heard about it - and had quickly gone out through the door, hopped in his car and driven home. So the assistant manager went into the pool room.

"I don't want anybody in here without coats and ties," Sinatra snapped. The assistant manager nodded, and walked back to his office.

On the following Monday, a cloudy and unseasonably cool California day, more than 100 people gathered inside a white television studio, an enormous room dominated by a white stage, white walls, and with dozens of lights and lamps dangling; it rather resembled a gigantic operating room. In this room, within an hour or so, NBC was scheduled to begin taping an hour-long show that would be televised in colour on the night of 24 November and would highlight the 25-year career of Frank Sinatra as a public entertainer. It would not attempt to probe, as the forthcoming CBS Sinatra documentary allegedly would, that area of Sinatra's life that he regards as private. The NBC show would be mainly an hour of Sinatra singing some of the hits that carried him from Hoboken to Hollywood, a show that would be interrupted only now and then by a few film clips and commercials for Budweiser beer.

Prior to his cold, Sinatra had been very excited about this show; he saw here an opportunity not only to appeal to those nostalgic, but also to communicate his talent to some rock'n'rollers; in a sense, he was battling the Beatles. The press releases

stressed this, reading: "If you happen to be tired of kid singers wearing mops of hair thick enough to hide a crate of melons ... it should be refreshing to consider the entertainment value of a video special titled *Sinatra - A Man And His Music* ..."

But now, in this NBC studio in Los Angeles, there was an atmosphere of anticipation and tension because of the uncertainty of the Sinatra voice. Minutes later, the real Frank Sinatra walked out.

He had been unable to rid himself of the cold, but was going to try to sing anyway because the schedule was tight and thousands of dollars were involved at this moment in the assembling of the orchestra and crews and the rental of the studio. But Sinatra, on his way to his small rehearsal room to warm up his voice, looked into the studio and saw that the stage and orchestra platform were not close together, as he had specifically requested, his lips tightened and he was obviously very upset. A few moments later, from his rehearsal room, could be heard the pounding of his fist against the top of the piano and the voice of his accompanist, Bill Miller, saying: "Guess I got to change my whole act."

When he strode into the studio the musicians all picked up their instruments and stiffened in their seats. Sinatra cleared his throat a few times and then, after rehearsing a few hallads with the orchestra, he sang "Don't Worry About Me" to his satisfaction and, being uncertain of how long his voice could last, suddenly became impotent.

"Why don't we tape this mother?" he called out, looking up toward the glass booth where the director, Dwight Hemion, and his staff were sitting. Their heads seemed to be down, focusing on the control board.

"Why don't we tape this mother?" Sinatra repeated.

The production stage manager, who stands near the camera wearing a headset, repeated Sinatra's words exactly into his line to the control room: "Why don't we tape this mother?"

Hemion did not answer. Possibly his switch was off. It was hard to know, because of the obscuring reflections the lights made against the glass booth.

"Why don't we put on a coat and tie," said Sinatra, then wearing a high-necked yellow pullover. But now Hemion was in the control booth out of communication; then he was down in the studio walking over to where Sinatra stood. A few minutes later they both left the studio and were on the way up to the control booth.

"Yes, I would mind going back," Sinatra snapped.

He rehearsed a few more songs, once or twice interrupting the orchestra when a certain instrumental sound was not quite what he wanted. It was hard to tell how well his voice was going to hold up, for this was early in the show; up to this point, however, everybody in the room seemed pleased, particularly when he sang an old, sentimental favourite written more than 20 years ago by Jimmy Van Heusen and Phil Silvers, "Nancy", inspired by the first of Sinatra's three children when she was just a few years old.

"If I don't see her each day, I miss her ... get what a thrill, each time I kiss her ..."

As Sinatra sang these words, though he has sung them hundreds and hundreds of times in the past, it was suddenly obvious to everybody in the studio that something quite special must be going on inside the man, because something quite special was coming out. He was singing

now, cold or no cold, with power and warmth, he was letting himself go, the public arrogance was gone, the private side was in this song about the girl who, it is said, understands him better than anybody else.

Sinatra stood on the stage, arms folded, glaring up across the cameras toward Hemion. Sinatra had sung *Nancy* with probably all he had in his voice on this day. The next few numbers contained raspy notes, and twice his voice completely cracked.

"Suddenly Hemion's voice came over the sound amplifier, very calmly: "Okay, Frank, would you mind going back over ..."

The tape was replayed for Sinatra. He watched only about five minutes of it before he started to shake his head. Then he said to Hemion: "Forget it, just forget it. You're wasting your time. What you got there." Sinatra said, nodding to the singing image of himself on the television screen, "is a man with a cold."

Then he left the control booth, ordering that the whole day's performance be scrubbed and future taping postponed until he had recovered.

After spending the week in Palm Springs, his cold much better, Frank Sinatra returned to Los Angeles, in time to see the long-awaited CBS documentary with his family. At about 9pm he drove to the home of his former wife, Nancy, and had dinner with her and their two daughters. Their son, whom they rarely see these days, was out of town. The CBS show, narrated by Walter Cronkite, began at 10pm. A minute before that, the Sinatra family, having

could do whatever he wanted



Portraits of the artist: Sinatra through the years. His career took him from sharp-suited crooner to Hollywood tough guy, but his style was always his own

Photographs: Rex Features, Sygma, Bob Willoughby/Redferns

finished dinner, turned their chairs around and faced the camera, united for whatever disaster might follow.

And like so much of Hollywood's fear, the apprehension about the CBS show proved to be without foundation. It was a highly flattering hour that did not deeply probe – as rumours suggested it would – into Sinatra's love life, or the Mafia, or other areas of his private province. While the documentary was not authorised, wrote Jack Gould in the next day's *New York Times*, "it could have been".

The next day Sinatra, following the orchestra, walked into the NBC studio, which did not resemble in the slightest the scene here of eight days before. On this occasion, Sinatra was in fine voice; he cracked jokes between numbers; nothing could upset him.

When the show was over, Sinatra watched the return on the monitor in the control room. He was very pleased, shaking hands with Dwight Hemion and his assistants. Then the whisky bottles were opened in Sinatra's dressing room. Telegrams and telephone calls continued to be received from all over the country with praise for the CBS show. There was even a call from the CBS producer, Don Hewitt, with whom Sinatra had been so angry a few days before. And Sinatra was still angry, feeling that CBS had betrayed him, though the show itself was not objectionable.

"Shall I drop a line to Hewitt?" his press agent asked.

"Can you send a fist through the mail?" Sinatra asked.

Sinatra was tired of all the talk, the gossip, the theory – tired of reading quotes about himself, of hearing what people were saying about him all over town. "He has everything, he cannot sleep, he gives nice gifts, he is not happy, but he would not trade, even for happiness, what he is..."

"He is a piece of our past – but only we have aged, he hasn't... we are dogged by domesticity, he isn't... we have complications, he doesn't... it is our fault, not his..."

"He controls the menus of every Italian restaurant in Los Angeles; if you want north Italian cooking, fly to Milan..."

"Men follow him, imitate him, fight to be near him... there is something of the locker room, the barracks about him... bird... bird..."

"He believes you must play it big, wide, expansively – the more open you are, the more you take in, your dimensions deepen, you grow; you become more what you are – bigger, richer..."

"He is better than anybody else, or at least they think he is, and he has to come up to it..." – Nancy Sinatra Jr.

"He is calm on the outside – inwardly a million things are happening to him..." – Dick Bakayam.

"He has an insatiable desire to live every moment to its fullest because, I guess, he feels that right around the corner is extinction..." – Brad Dexter.

"All I ever got out of any of my marriages was the two years Artie Shaw financed on an analyst's couch..." – Ava Gardner.

"We weren't mother and son – we were buddies..." – Dolly Sinatra.

Sinatra said it had been a tedious three weeks, and now he just wanted to get away, go to Las Vegas, let off some steam. So he hopped in his jet and soared over the California hills across the Nevada flats, then over miles and miles of desert to The Sands and the Clay-Patterson fight.

On the eve of the fight he stayed up all night and slept through most of the afternoon, though his recorded voice could be heard singing in the lobby of The Sands, in the gambling casino, even in the toilets.

The fight, called a holy war between Muslims and Christians, was preceded by the introduction of three balding ex-champions, Rocky Marciano, Joe Louis and Sonny Liston – and then there was "The Star Spangled Banner", sung by another man from out of the past, Eddie Fisher.

Floyd Patterson chased Clay around the ring in the first round, but was unable to reach him, and from then on he was Clay's toy, the bout ending in a technical knockout in the 12th round. Half-an-hour later, nearly everybody had forgotten about the fight and was back at the gambling tables, or lining up to buy tickets for the Dean Martin-Sinatra-Bishop nightclubs routine on the stage of The Sands. This routine, which includes Sammy Davis Jr when he is in town, consists of a few songs and much cut-

ting up; all of it very informal, very special, and rather ethnic – Martin, a drink in hand, asking Bishop: "did you ever see a Jew jitsu?"; and Bishop playing a Jewish waiter, warning the two Italians to watch out "because I got my own group – the Matza".

Then, after the last show at The Sands, the Sinatra crowd, which now numbered about 20 – and included Jilly, who had flown in from New York; Jimmy Cannon, Sinatra's favourite sports columnist; Harold Gibbons, a Teamster official expected to take over if Hoffa went to jail – all got into a line of cars and headed for another club. It was 3am. The night was young.

They stopped at The Sahara, taking a long table near the back, and listened to a bald-headed little comedian named Don Rickles.

By 4am, Frank Sinatra led the group out of The Sahara, some of them carrying their glasses of whisky with them, sipping it along the sidewalk and in the cars; then, returning to The Sands, they walked into the casino. It was still packed with people; the roulette wheels were spinning, and the crap-shooters screaming in the far corner.

Sinatra, holding a shot glass of bourbon in his left hand, walked through the crowd. He, unlike some of his friends, was perfectly pressed, his tuxedo tie precisely pointed, his shoes unsmudged. He never seems to lose his dignity, never lets his guard completely down no matter how much he has drunk, nor how long he has been up. He never sways when he walks, like Dean Martin, nor does he ever dance in the aisles or jump up on tables, like Sammy Davis.

A part of Sinatra, no matter where he is, is never there. There is always a part of him, though sometimes a small part, that remains *Il Padrone*. Even now, resting his shot glass on the blackjack table, facing the dealer, Sinatra stood a bit back from the table, not leaning against it. He reached under his tuxedo jacket into his trouser pocket and came up with a thick but clean wad of bills. Gently he peeled off a \$100 bill and placed it on the green baize table. The dealer dealt him two cards. Sinatra called for a third card, overbid, lost the hundred.

Without a change of expression,

Sinatra put down a second \$100 bill. He lost that, then he put down a third, and lost that. Then he placed two \$100 bills on the table and lost those. Finally, putting his sixth \$100 bill on the table, and losing it, Sinatra moved away from the table, nodding to the man, and announcing: "Good dealer."

The crowd that had gathered around him now opened up to let him through. But a woman stepped in front of him, handing him a piece of paper to autograph. He signed it and then he said: "Thank you."

In the rear of The Sands' large dining room was a long table reserved for Sinatra. The table was about the same size as the one reserved for Sinatra whenever he is at Jilly's in New York; and the people seated around this table in Las Vegas were many of the same people who are often seen with Sinatra at Jilly's or at a restaurant in California, or in Italy, or in New Jersey, or wherever Sinatra happens to be.

When Sinatra sits to dine, his trusted friends are close; and no matter where he is, no matter how elegant the place may be, there is something of the neighbourhood showing, because Sinatra, no matter how far he has come, is still something of the boy from the neighbourhood – only now he can take his neighbourhood with him.

In some ways, this quasi-family affair at a reserved table in a public place is the closest thing Sinatra now has to home life. Perhaps, having had a home and left it, this approximation is as close as he cares to come; although his does not seem precisely so, because he speaks with such warmth about his family, keeps in close touch with his first wife, and insists that she make no decision without first consulting him.

This was his second night in Las Vegas, and Frank Sinatra sat with friends in The Sands' dining room until nearly 3am. He slept through much of the day, then flew back to Los Angeles, and on the following morning he was driving his little gold cart through the Paramount Pictures movie lot. He was scheduled to complete two final scenes with the sultry blonde actress Virna Lisi, in the film *Assault on a Queen*. There were only two scenes left: a short one,

to be filmed in the pool, and a longer and passionate one featuring Sinatra and Virna Lisi, to be shot on a simulated beach.

Frank Sinatra was on the beach, supposedly gazing up at the stars, and Virna

Lisi was approaching him, loss one of her shoes near him to announce her presence, then sit near him and prepare for a passionate session. Just before beginning, Miss Lisi made a practice toss of her shoe toward the prone figure of Sinatra sprawled on the sand. As she tossed her shoe, Sinatra called out, "Hit me in my bird and I'm going home."

Virna Lisi, who understands little English and certainly none of Sinatra's special vocabulary, looked confused, but everybody behind the camera laughed. She threw the shoe toward him. It twirled in the air and landed on his stomach. "Well, that's about three inches too high," he announced.

Then Jack Donahue had them re-hears their lines, and Sinatra, still very charged from the Las Vegas trip, and anxious to get the cameras rolling, said, "Let's try one." Donahue, not certain that Sinatra and Lisi knew their lines well enough, never the less said okay, and an assistant with a clapperboard called, "419, Take 1," and Virna Lisi approached with the shoe and tossed it at Frank lying on the beach. It fell short of his thigh, and Sinatra's right eye raised almost imperceptibly, but the crew got the message, and smiled.

"What do the stars tell you tonight?" Miss Lisi said, delivering her first line, and sitting next to Sinatra on the beach. "The stars tell me tonight I'm an idiot." Sinatra said, "a gold-plated idiot to get mixed up in this thing..."

"Cut," Donahue said. There were some microphone shadows on the sand, and Virna Lisi was not sitting in the proper place near Sinatra.

"419, Take 2," the clapperboard man called.

Miss Lisi again approached, threw the shoe at him, this time falling short – Sinatra exhaling only slightly – and she said: "What do the stars tell you tonight?" "The stars tell me I'm an idiot," Sinatra said, "a gold-plated idiot to get mixed up in this thing..."

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pretty women standing in the booth behind the engineers, women who smile at Sinatra and softly move their bodies to the mellow mood of his music:

"Will this be moon love,
Nothing but moon love,
Will you be gone when the dawn,
Comes stealing through..."

After he is finished, the record is played back on tape, and Nancy Sinatra, who has just walked in, joins her father near the front of the orchestra to hear the playback. They listen silently, all eyes on them, the king, the princess; and when the music ends there is applause from the control booth, Nancy smiles, and her father snaps his fingers and says, kicking a foot: "Ooba-dee-booboo!"

The musicians put their instruments into their cases, grab their coats, and begin to file out, saying good night to Sinatra. He knows them all by name, knows much about them personally, from their bachelor days, through their ups and downs, as they know him.

The rest of the month was bright and balmy. The record session had gone magnificently, the television shows were out of the way, and now Sinatra was driving out to his office to begin co-ordinating his latest projects. He had an engagement at The Sands, a new spy film called *The Naked Runner*, to be shot in England, and a couple more albums to do. And within a week he would be 50.

"Life is a beautiful thing,
As long as I hold the string,
I'd be a silly so-and-so,
If I should ever let go."

Frank Sinatra stopped his car. The light was red. Pedestrians passed quickly across his windshield but, as usual, one did not. It was a girl in her twenties. She remained at the kerb staring at him. Through the corner of his left eye he could see her, and he knew, because it happens almost every day, that she was thinking. It looks like him, but is it? Just before the light turned green, Sinatra turned toward her, looked directly into her eyes, waiting for the reaction he knew would come. It came, and he smiled. She smiled. And he was gone.

It didn't mean a thing unless Ol' Blue Eyes made it swing

Once criticised for singing songs as if he believed them, that was precisely what made him the best. By Mark Steyn

Sounds fa-ake. He can't do it. You can almost hear him cringing. His problem is that the song isn't about anything except singing a jolly song, it's enough for Bing, but not for Frank. For a more extreme example, try "Home on the Range". Crosby's says nothing other than "Ah, let's gather round the old joanna and sing a well-loved favourite from 1873." Sinatra's is extraordinary: the guy sounds like his home really is on the range and the deer and the antelope are frolicking about 15 yards from the microphone. Inevitably, there was soon heard a discouraging word: he sings songs, said one early reviewer, as if he believes them. And that was meant as a criticism.

Sinatra was the first male singer

to say, "Hey, all these songs about women whose men done them wrong. It works the other way, too." So, he called up Ira Gershwin and persuaded him to maculate "The Man That Got Away" into "The Gal..."

Of all the pop idols, from Jolson to Madonna, who ventured into films, Sinatra's easily the best. You can tell good an actor he is from the songs: these numbers seem first-person autobiographical in a way that Bing's or Ella's never are.

But for someone who represents the apogee of popular singing, he's never really been, apart from that first flush of bobbysoxers, a pop singer. Pop is fashion and Sinatra's usually been at odds with the prevailing fash-

Columbia, the man who single-handedly produced the worst records of the era and debauched the currency of mainstream Tin Pan Alley.

Summertime blues: Britain basks in good weather, but we still can't get a drink in the Continental-style café and the air quality's lousy



Continental life appearing on the streets of London. But outdated laws have hindered the growth of café-bars. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

MP urges relaxing of drinking laws that squeeze out café-bars

By Colin Brown and Linus Gregoriadis

READING the newspaper in a café-bar with a relaxing glass of beaujolais and a cappuccino is the sort of continental scene that has already arrived in Britain.

But the growth of European-style cafés has been hindered by outdated drinking laws which mean that, in order to sell alcohol to customers without a meal, they need the same kind of licence as a pub.

Gisela Stuart, the Labour MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, is urging the Home Office – which is reviewing the licensing laws – to introduce a new hybrid licence for café-bars which will allow them to serve wine and beer but not spirits. The present statutes are more than 30 years old.

After speaking to licensing magistrates in Birmingham, she is convinced that Britain should be brought into line with the rest of Europe. "Any place which operates like a café and serves a pint of beer or a glass of wine has to have a restaurant or pub license," she said.

"It seems a shame that you can go to the Continent and have a glass of wine in a café-bar when you can't always do the same here. It would be good to have café-bars in the

centre of Birmingham. Birmingham is an international city which caters for large numbers of international and local visitors, particularly along the canal and city centre. To me it is a question of growth and provision of service."

Ministers have told her that a review of the licensing laws is being carried out, and they are sympathetic, but it could be two years before an appropriate legislative slot is found. She is considering tabling amendments to a forthcoming law and order Bill to speed up the action.

Ms Stuart, a former law lecturer who was educated in Germany, said: "At Christmas they had glühwein at one café in Birmingham centre, but they had to have it fenced off and someone at the entrance checking everyone was over 18."

David Lees, the principal clerk for licensing in Birmingham, said that the licensing laws did not offer enough flexibility. A new type of licence could be granted more easily because it would meet with less resistance from police, he said.

He added: "Under the proposals, there would be a new type of licence for a café-bar to provide an alternative to a pub or restaurant. There are no concrete plans for these yet but these are being formulated.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Ozone fear mars sunshine weekend

By Mark Oliver

THE THREAT of ozone pollution is casting a shadow over the sunny weather forecast for this weekend.

Earlier this week, the Government released summer smog warnings but rain dispelled any real problem. Yesterday, however, experts said that they expected ozone levels to increase to potentially "high" levels over the next few days.

"We've had rain this week which washes ozone out of the atmosphere," said Michael Dukes, from the Press Association Weather Centre.

"But we are having very sunny weather now and I expect the ozone levels to build up. It happens gradually if the days stay sunny without the weather breaking. I expect ozone levels will rise everywhere in the UK, apart from Northern Ireland, to moderate and possibly high levels in some areas."

A spokeswoman for the Meteorological Office said: "We are taking the risk of smog seriously because it's so still at the moment."

Mr Dukes said: "Obviously the wind is a factor as it mixes pollution with clearer air and there are low levels of wind expected over the next few days."

He added that, contrary to public perceptions, an increase in ozone will choke up the countryside more than the cities. "I'm sure people think of pollution as being an urban problem but the other pollutants in cities, anyone who left their motor at home would help reduce the smog. People need to ask themselves before a journey - do I really need to use the car?" she asked. "And if they are stuck in a traffic jam they should turn the engine off."

She added that not using solvent-based paints would also help and people should refrain from burning solid fuels.

asthma - should be aware their symptoms may worsen."

The elderly should be particularly careful and anyone who has noticed their breathing being affected by hot weather in the past should also avoid strenuous activity, she added.

The environment minister, Michael Meacher, said that everybody needed to "do their bit" to reduce air pollutants. A spokeswoman from his department said that as cars were the major source of ozone in cities, anyone who left their motor at home would help reduce the smog. "People need to ask themselves before a journey - do I really need to use the car?" she asked. "And if they are stuck in a traffic jam they should turn the engine off."

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MPs press Blair for 'Old Labour' Queen's Speech

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR faced calls for an "Old Labour" Queen's Speech - including a demand for the Government to revive the Bill to ban fox-hunting - at a private meeting with Labour MPs at the Commons.

The Prime Minister assured backbenchers at a packed meeting that he recognised that there had to be a "balance between New and Old" Labour, but he gave little ground to the old Labour left.

Some MPs voiced concern that in last week's local elections voters failed to turn out in Labour's traditional heartlands, in spite of the claims by ministers that the low poll showed there was little unrest. There were warnings that it could lead to bigger defeats for Labour in next year's elections.

The meeting was intended to allow the backbenchers to sound off on the issues they wanted raising in the Queen's speech, but those who attended said it showed there was

more support for "Old Labour" policies than appeared the case in the Commons chamber, where discipline was strictly adhered to.

Labour MPs said there were at least three calls for legislation to improve the state pension, including one demand to restore the link between pensions and earnings over a 10-year period.

The MPs also called for the Queen's Speech to include Government Bills on: banning fox hunting; human rights, and the protection of immigrants' rights; a rolling programme of updating the local government electoral register; the abolition of the Child Support Agency; and free television licences for pensioners.

Mr Blair is unlikely to take up many of the ideas, which smack of old-style Labour. The Government has made it clear there will be no attempt to restore the link between earnings and pensions, and ministers are wary of becoming embroiled in the controversy over fox-hunting caused by the private members' Bill by Michael

Foster (which has in effect been killed by Tory opponents through lack of time).

At the meeting Mr Blair was challenged by the veteran left-winger Dennis Skinner to abandon the Tory spending targets. Mr Blair insisted there had been more spent on education and the health service than by the Tories. But Mr Skinner, MP for Bolsover, said he wanted wealth redistribution from rich to poor by increasing the total spending beyond the sums previously agreed under the Tories.

The only item on the Labour backbenchers' shopping list for the next Queen's Speech which seemed to gain acceptance from Mr Blair was a call for a Bill on rights for the disabled.

Ministers also at the meeting privately gave assurances that although the CSA will not be abolished, it will be reformed, by taking a fixed percentage of salary from errant fathers. This would be simpler than the present system of taking decisions on each individual case, which has led to massive backlogs and anger over claims.



Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott using public transport to get to the Labour Party conference in Swansea yesterday

Photograph: Phil Rees

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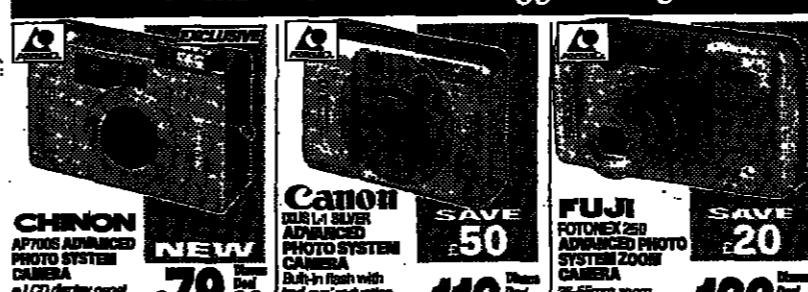
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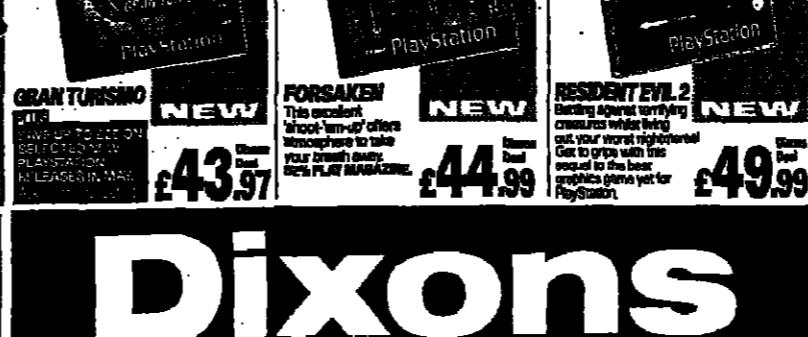
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There's a Great Deal going on

Minister holds talks to avert revolt by GPs

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

spend on their annual budgets, in spite of cash limits.

But the Government has so far refused to move over demands by the GPs to ring-fence the money GPs receive for computers, increasing the size of their surgeries, and hiring more staff, which is counted as part of their annual income.

They fear that they could lose the money if they join groups of other GPs who have other priorities. The GMSC leaders are facing a censure motion at the BMA conference in June for being more militant against the changes.

Mr Milburn had talks with Dr John Chisholm, the GPs chief negotiator at the BMA, over dinner at the Commons to try to reassure the doctors.

The health minister yesterday said he would be writing to the General Medical Services Committee before a crunch meeting next Thursday in response to their demands, but it is unlikely he will be able to meet their demands.

Dr Chisholm privately doubts that the GPs were very angry, and growing increasingly worried about the proposals to make them join primary-care groups covering around 100,000 patients by April, next year.

"The reality is unless these issues are addressed in a way that is widely perceived as being satisfactory, I think that GPs are likely to walk away from the system. They fear that patient care is going to be affected if they cannot refer and prescribe in a clinically justifiable way in the interests of their patients."

Mr Milburn has reassured the GPs that they will retain their status as independent contractors in the NHS, they will keep their clinical freedom and they will be allowed to over-

see their patients.

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Cannes '98: Film festival premières for the psychedelic world of a Seventies cult book and the story of Joe, an alcoholic Glaswegian



Taiwan's Tang Kui Mei, star of *The Hole*, a Cannes competition film directed by 1994 Golden Lion Winner Tsai Ming-Liang. Photograph: Brian Harris

Aliens and gut reactions

ALONGSIDE the Palme D'Or I would like to see a special award for La Grande Gaffe. The lifetime achievement award for a Cannes Gaffe belongs, of course, to former Conservative arts minister Stephen Dorrell, who came here a couple of years back and praised the then president of the festival jury, the exquisite actress Jeanne Moreau, as "a great Frenchman". He needed several bodyguards when he walked down the Croisette after that.

Heading the candidates so far this week is the beautiful actress - or, as Mr Dorrell might say, a splendid American chap, Winona Ryder. She told the world's press that a film "has to affect me gutturally. I have to feel it in my stomach".

Gets you right in the throat too, Winona.

Another favourite so far comes from the publicity material for *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Several thousand packs were printed referring to that well-known extraterrestrial beat poet, Alien Ginsberg.

May '68 and life mirrors art

ROMAN POLANSKI is in town and has been reminiscing of his time on the Cannes jury in 1968, a somewhat hairy year in France.

"The whole country was paralysed," he recalls. "And when the festival was stopped all those people were stuck in Cannes and they could not return. I remember that many of the guests were picked up by Sam Spiegel on his boat. It was like a second Exodus."

Those who did stay remained to fight it out, literally. "The stage in front of the screen was full of people fighting."

CANNES DIARY

was an assurance of quality. Thompson leaned forward to the woman and asked: "Where is it you come from, and how easy is it for me to move there?"

Prestige but few financial rewards

THE FESTIVAL climaxes with the Palme d'Or, one of the most prestigious prizes in world cinema.

But a gateway to riches it isn't. Last year's joint winners, Iran's *The Taste of Cherry*, according to figures in *Screen International*, has taken just £100,000 in the United States and has not been released yet in the UK.

Japan's *The Eel* has taken £500,000 in the UK and has not been released in the States.

Our own Kathy Burke was best actress but the film she starred in, Gary Oldman's *Nil By Mouth*, has taken less than £150,000 in the States and £500,000 in the UK.

The *Ice Storm* won special jury prize but didn't get a single Oscar nomination. But then, the president of this year's jury, Martin Scorsese, won the Palme d'Or for *Taxi Driver* in 1976. And he is still looking for his first Oscar.

In the national interests

TODAY the British pavilion here will stop all film business to show the FA Cup Final to all the temporary ex-pats.

Two nights ago the American pavilion set up an all-ticket satellite showing of the last episode of *Seinfeld*.

What does that tell us about national differences? That Americans are mad. The live link was not on until nearly four in the morning local time.

David Lister

Sky TV signs films deal with 'This Life' production firm

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

THE production company behind *This Life* and *Between the Lines* has signed a major film deal with Rupert Murdoch's cable and satellite service, Sky Television.

World Productions, one of the country's most respected and successful independent drama producers, has guaranteed to develop three films for Sky's subscription movie channels in the *Sky Movies Originals* initiative. Sky will invest about £2m (£1.2m) in each film produced, although other investors may be brought in on a project.

The films will be Sky's first venture into original film production. World, by contrast,

has a heavyweight track-record under its reclusive chairman, Tony Garnett, of making controversial and acclaimed dramas. Mr Garnett's credits range from the ground-breaking *Cathy Come Home*, through the black comedy *Cardiac Arrest*, to the mainstream BBC 1 series *Ballykissangel*.

The deal is something of a departure for Sky, which predominantly broadcasts US imports including *Beverly Hills 90210*, *The Simpsons*, *Star Trek: Voyager* and *The X-Files*. Recently, however, Sky's head of programming, James Baker, and Elisabeth Murdoch, general manager of broadcasting, have both put a high priority on securing "must see" shows for the main entertainment channel.

Mr Baker said of the World deal: "It's a first step for us, and they're a very good bunch to start with ... What they bring is such excellence in terms of script that people will think Sky isn't just making predictable stuff."

Sex symbol goes gonzo in tale of early drug days

By David Lister
in Cannes

ONE OF the great cult novels of the last 30 years, Hunter S Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, has finally been brought to the screen in a version unlikely to escape controversy.

Yesterday, the film's director, Monty Python member Terry Gilliam, defended its powerful drugs imagery and said it was time to take a more grown-up view of drugs.

The 1971 book told of journalist Thompson's journey with a friend to Las Vegas in an orgy of drug-taking as the dream of the Sixties faded. His reportage style, told through the device of fiction with heavy lacing of psychedelia, gave birth to a new genre, "gonzo journalism", and bequeathed the phrase Fear and Loathing to the language.

The movie, which had its world film premiere at the Cannes Film Festival last night, stars a shaven-headed Johnny Depp in the Thompson role. Several attempts in the past to make

the film have failed partly because of its explicit passages relating to good and bad drug trips.

The making of this version has its own bizarre tales. Depp told yesterday how he had spent three months getting to know Thompson in the fortified compound where the latter lives. For five days he lived in Thompson's basement. Depp, a heavy smoker, only noticed after three days that there was a leg of gunpowder in the basement.

Describing his first meeting with Thompson (who has a small cameo in the film), Depp said: "I first met him in a bar. He came in with a cattle prod in one hand and a stun gun in the other. I went with him to his house. He had built a bomb in his kitchen. He took it outside and gave me a gun to fire at it. There was an 80ft fireball."

The film shows use and abuse of every drug from the era, as well as allusions to under-age sex, violence and intimidation. Yet some critics found its unrelenting lack of variation in tone and pace tedious. But the presence of the

popular actor and sex symbol Johnny Depp - who put in a good performance - should guarantee it wide distribution.

Yesterday, Terry Gilliam was asked whether he was worried that drugs in the Nineties have far more negative connotations than they had in 1971. He replied: "There's such hypocrisy about drugs. It's all shock horror. But as a world we're dependent on drugs. I drink very strong coffee. Prozac is acceptable."

"I think the drugs of the Sixties and Seventies were expansive drugs for better or worse. Yes it's dangerous, but driving a car is dangerous. We're so obsessed with avoiding danger and it can be avoiding life."

"It's nonsense the way people talk about drugs. People should talk about them openly ... I've been feeling, since the Eighties, that we've gone through such a constrained time when everything has kind of tightened up. Everybody is frightened to say what they feel, frightened to live in an extraordinary, outrageous way, and it's time to take off those chains."



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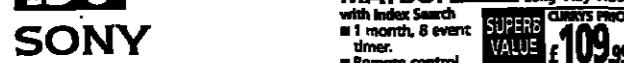
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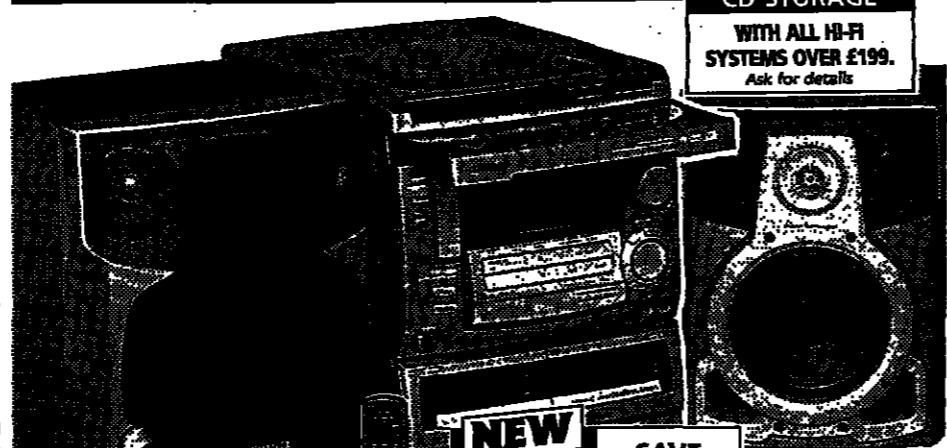
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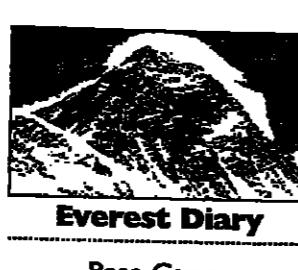
Summit here we come – weather permitting

Today's Everest Diary comes from **Sundeep Dhillon** – one of Stephen Goodwin's climbing companions – at Base Camp as the Himalayan Kingdom Expedition prepares for its summit attempt

15 May, Summit Fever
WELL... it finally looks like the elusive weather window may be arriving. The forecast predicts a weak ridge of high pressure over the area, with the jet-stream at its weakest so far. This is predicted to last until 21 May when a trough is expected to pass through. Based on this assumption, and depending upon today's forecast, this is the provisional plan.

16 May, Camp 1
Jim, Lily, Josie and myself will set off at 0500 for the four-hour journey to Camp 1 at the top of the Icefall (6,000m). The others will go directly to Camp 2 (Advanced Base Camp – ABC) at the end of the Western Cwm (6,400m) to join Dave Walsh, Rob Owen, and Steve who climbed up on Thursday.

17 May, Camp 2 (ABC)
The four of us from Camp 1 will move up to ABC, possibly taking tents with us. In the meantime the others will have a rest day there, while the three Sherpas go to Camp 3 and dig it out in preparation for us.



Everest Diary

Base Camp

18 May, Camp 3
The nine Western climbers will move up the Lhotse Face to Camp 3 at 7,200m, taking up to six hours with three Sherpas in support. We will use oxygen while we sleep.

19 May, Camp 4

After an early start, we will set off for Camp 4 on the South Col at an altitude of 8,000m. We will be using oxygen, and will attempt to complete the six-to-eight hour journey by noon so that we have time to rest before commencing our summit bid the same evening. We will spend the rest of the day resting, drinking fluids, and attempting to eat. The temptation to stay awake and visit the east side of the col for a look down the awesome Kangshung Face into Tibet, will be great, as will the view at sunset.



Sherpas and oxygen are ready: the Himalayan Kingdom Expedition hopes to make its bid for the summit on 20 May

Photograph: S Lowe

20 May, Summit Day?
We will aim to leave the South Col between 10pm and midnight. We will each have three three-litre bottles of oxygen. Using head torches, we will cross the col and climb a 500m gully to gain the crest of the South-East Ridge at 8,400m. Hopefully the sun will have risen by now, warming up our stiff, cold bodies.

The ridge leads to the South Summit (8,763m) steepening towards the top, and the true summit will be visible. Although it looks close, there is a narrow ridge in between, and halfway along this is the notorious Hillary Step, a steep 30ft groove. An easy final ridge leads to the summit (8,848m), marked with survey poles and prayer flags. We hope to arrive no later than 11am.

From the summit I will be able to look along the North-East Ridge to the high point I

reached in 1996, just below the First Step, and if the weather is good, I will be able to see into the Tibetan plains and east across the magnificent peaks of the Himalaya to Kanchenjunga, my first Himalayan mountain, which I visited in 1990.

After the obligatory summit photographs, we will begin the descent to the col. Remembering that descent is often the most dangerous part of the climb, we will depart the summit by noon, in order that we can be safely back in our tents before darkness falls at around 6.30pm.

21 May, ABC

We will be keen to make another early start and get out of the "Death Zone". Although the weather is predicted to deteriorate, we should manage comfortably to descend to ABC.

22 May, Base Camp

There is still one more journey to make through the icefall before we reach the safety of Base Camp.

This plan is entirely dependent on the weather and our own personal ability. None of the members of the team have been to the summit before, although some have been very high on the mountain. The nature of climbing Everest is such that there are only enough resources for a single summit attempt. If the weather is bad, we may be detained at ABC for a number of days.

The earliest anyone can expect to hear from us is 22 May, but do not get concerned if there is no contact for some days after this.

State schools forge links with private sector

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

PUPILS from state and independent schools will take part in 48 projects which aim to end "apartheid" between state and fee-paying schools.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said that £350,000 of public money would be spent on the schemes, which will bring 11,000 pupils from private and state schools together to learn subjects ranging from cricket to maths.

In a speech last November Mr Byers announced that ministers were abandoning Labour's

traditional hostility to private schools. He offered them a new partnership in the crusade to raise standards. The party's manifesto before the last election spoke of the need to end "apartheid" between state and fee-paying schools.

Mr Byers insists that independent schools can learn from state schools as well as vice versa, particularly in areas such as new technology and the assessment of new pupils. He said that the Government's original offer of £250,000 had been increased by £100,000 after nearly 300 applications to take part in the scheme were received.

The Sutton Trust, which aims to provide educational opportunities for pupils from less-privileged backgrounds, is also spending £250,000 on the scheme.

"Our project is based on total sharing and on the realisation that there are particular strengths in each school," he said.

In London, Highgate and Channing schools, both private, will run a Saturday-morning scheme for able mathematicians with Gladstone Community School in Haringey. Westminster School will offer help in maths for pupils and teachers at a nearby state secondary, the Grey Coat Hospital. Pupils from Merchant Taylors', an independent school, will help children at Greenfields primary Hertfordshire with information technology.

Cricket coaching will also be on offer for the primary pupils. Girls from Manchester High School will help pupils from Medlock primary school with literacy at a homework club and staff from each school will teach in the other. Pupils and teachers from Bolton School (Girls) will work together with Daisy Hill (St James') primary school on a project which includes science, maths, geography and IT.

Mr Byers said that the scheme would bury old prejudices: "Old divisions have to be put to one side if we are serious about learning from what works well. Our commitment to raising standards is paramount. Independent and state schools have much to learn from each other. In the past there has been co-operation but rarely in the area of academic work."

Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said it was considering funding a number of other schemes that had been submitted.

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This panda appears in *Pandas*, by Heather Angel, a former zoologist, whose book features a collection of rare photographs of the animals taken in their natural enclosures in China.

Ten-year jail term for rapist policeman

A POLICE officer was yesterday sentenced to 10 years in prison for two rapes and an indecent assault.

Mr Justice Hooper, sitting at Leeds Crown Court, told John Blott that pre-sentence reports had described him as "arrogant, egocentric and devoid of remorse". The judge said the report also said Blott was a dangerous man, especially to women, and there was a substantial risk that that would remain the case.

The judge said Blott, 33, a former Manchester City and Carlisle United goalkeeper, would not be eligible for parole until he had served five years of his sentence and he would recommend he should not be released until he had served at least two-thirds of it.

The judge said aggravating features of the case were the ages of the rape victims, who were 16 and 18. "You were a police officer, the victim trusted you and you abused that trust. You thought you could get away with what you were doing because you were a police officer."

Blott had been found guilty of two rapes and one indecent assault two weeks ago when a jury returned majority verdicts on the eighth day of the trial. The police officer, of Redcar, Cleveland, was cleared of three charges of indecent assault. The judge has ordered one indictment of rape and three indecent assaults be laid on file.

The court heard that all the attacks took place after Blott met women during his work as a beat bobby in the Teesside area between 1993 and 1995.

His first victim was a 16-year-old college student whom he

met in August 1993 when he was 23. He arranged a date and took her to his home where he raped her twice.

Blott met his next victim in November 1994 while he was on duty outside a band concert at Middlesbrough Town Hall. He arranged to take the 22-year-old for a drink but he drove to his home and indecently assaulted her.

The judge said the woman had been left frightened and humiliated by Blott. She had agreed to go out with him because she knew he was a policeman and she had been brought up to trust the police.

The final attack happened in March 1995 when Blott raped an 18-year-old garage receptionist twice in his living room leaving her "stunned, drained and utterly disgusted". The judge told Blott the young woman's distress in giving evidence was obvious to everyone in court.

During the trial prosecution Aidan Marron QC, described Blott as a liar with a "monumental sexual appetite". He regarded himself as "some kind of sexual Olympian" who turned violent when women resisted his advances.

Blott told the jury he could not count the number of women he had been out with. He admitted describing himself as "handsome man with a wonderful body" who women were attracted to.

He often picked up women while he was out on the beat, abusing his position of trust.

His victims initially failed to report the attacks because they feared they would never be believed against the word of a policeman.

M&S puts organic food back in shops

MARKS & Spencer, which stopped selling organic fruit and vegetables five years ago, is bringing it back in response to customer demand, it was announced yesterday.

Initially, only seven products, all sourced from overseas, will be available, restricted to stores around London. But the chain said that it was looking to expand the range and outlets, and to encourage more British farmers to go organic to meet demand.

M&S said that it would be holding an information day for its suppliers in the United Kingdom to discuss getting home-produced organic supplies. It takes two to three years for farms to become accredited as organic following the removal of chemicals and pesticides. Eighty

per cent of organic food now sold in Britain is imported.

The launch products will include four golden apples for £1.99, four tomatoes for £1.69 and a red pepper for £1.29. The other lines are red apples, avocados, baby tomatoes and potatoes. The store said it also hoped to include organic beef, pork and lamb.

The Soil Association, which sets the standards for organic farming in the UK, welcomed the initiative. Patrick Holden, its director, said: "We are delighted that, as one of the UK's leading retailers, Marks & Spencer is offering its customers organic fruit and vegetables and we look forward to seeing more M&S produce being grown by organic suppliers."

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Eight statesmen and the key issues on their agenda

							
Tony Blair British Prime Minister	Romano Prodi Italian Prime Minister	Gerhard Schröder German Chancellor	Ryutaro Hashimoto Japanese Prime Minister	Jacques Chirac French President	Jean Chrétien Canadian Prime Minister	Bill Clinton US President	Boris Yeltsin Russian President
Biggest domestic problem	Last week's landslides in the south prompted rows with his Green party allies, while his partners Rifondazione Comunista voted against a government motion to extend NATO to the east.	Good, with 1997 inflation at 1.8 percent, the deficit below three percent of GDP, and industry confident of healthy results in 1998. Over ten percent of households are still classed as 'poor', however.	A shaky coalition between his Liberal Democrats and two smaller partners; important elections in July. Could well get dumped by his party.	Recession - 1997 output was 0.5 per cent below 1996. Unemployment is at 10.5 per cent, and falling. The budget deficit is 3.5 per cent of GDP.	Not many, at the moment. The status of French-speaking Quebec is on the back-burner.	Riding along very nicely on the crest of the American wave. Unemployment is 8.5 per cent and falling.	It has halved in size since the end of the Soviet Union, although there is a large black economy.
State of economy	Good, with 1997 inflation at 1.8 percent, the deficit below three percent of GDP, and industry confident of healthy results in 1998. Over ten percent of households are still classed as 'poor', however.	Marked improvement in 1997, with low inflation, record foreign trade, and record job creation. The unemployment rate is down to 10.5 per cent.	Sick and getting worse. Unemployment is at 3.9 per cent, a record high. A package of tax cuts and spending is considered insufficient by many.	Stagnant, with 1997 output 0.5 per cent below 1996. Unemployment is 10.5 per cent.	Stagnant, with 1997 output 0.5 per cent below 1996. Unemployment is 10.5 per cent.	Stagnant, with 1997 output 0.5 per cent below 1996. Unemployment is 8.5 per cent.	President's ratings in single figures
Popularity rating	Italy's find his professional image reassuring. In a recent poll he was the country's most popular politician, with 42 percent happy with his performance.	Employment is high on his list, as are boosting ties between the US and the solving of the unrest in Kosovo.	The lowest since he took office two years ago, at about 30 per cent.	Recession, still 10.5 per cent unemployment, and political instability.	If an election were held, polls indicate that his Liberal party would get 51 per cent of the vote.	To promote a new system to manage international capital flows and financial institutions, similar to the World Trade Organisation.	To establish Russia's voice at the high table of global politics.
Priorities at G8 summit	Stability - he just wants to reform the world's financial systems, prevent economic meltdown in the wake of the Asian crisis, eliminate organised crime, save the environment. Wrap up the World Trade deals and set off on the millennium bug.	Keen cyclist. May try to get other summiteers to join him for a ride as he did in Amsterdam last year.	To convince the rest of the Group that Japan's (and Asia's) economy will recover from its present difficulties.	Recession, still 10.5 per cent unemployment, and political instability.	Mr Chrétien is a keen skier; he is unlikely to get much time in on the slopes during his stay in the West Midlands.	Fishing is now his favourite relaxation. He used to enjoy hunting, though that would seem to be out since his latest heart operation.	
Likely leisure activities in Birmingham	Shooting at people, kicking canaries and keeping an ear on Newcastle's progress in the FA Cup.	Keen cyclist. May try to get other summiteers to join him for a ride as he did in Amsterdam last year.	He may have a lot more of it soon; perhaps he could polish up his golf.	Recession, still 10.5 per cent unemployment, and political instability.	Mr Chrétien is a keen skier; he is unlikely to get much time in on the slopes during his stay in the West Midlands.	Fishing is now his favourite relaxation. He used to enjoy hunting, though that would seem to be out since his latest heart operation.	

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Leaders tested by turmoil in the Far East

INDIA

THE eight are united in outrage at the Indian nuclear tests this week but divided in their response. While the US and Japan have imposed sanctions and Canada is of a similar mind, Russia and France are opposed. Britain will not bring in unilateral sanctions. As host, it will seek "maximum level of agreement" during last night's summit inaugural dinner, at which India was heading the agenda. Measures include the recall of ambassadors, as Britain has done. The leaders, however, are concentrating at least as much on preventing Pakistan from matching India's tests. The Eight will be combining incentives for Pakistan with warnings that if it defies world opinion it will pay the same price as India.

Rupert Cornwell examines the main issues on the table at weekend summit

INTERNATIONAL AND

So important is the issue considered by Britain that police experts will make a presentation to the leaders today. The problem is twofold: "traditional" cross-border crimes like drug-racketeering, and the growing menace of electronic financial fraud and theft. There are no significant differences among the G8 on the urgency of the matter, now that 96 per cent of bank transactions are electronic. Their key recommendation will be that enhanced policing will only work with the support of all major financial powers and not just G8.

ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

This was a main topic at last night's dinner, where Japan's Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, was chairing discussion. The sense is that, apart from Indonesia, the situation is improving. The G8 was likely to give a formal welcome to Japan's \$120bn package of last 24 April. Though some countries may have doubts over whether Tokyo has done enough, the "ganging-up" on Japan that seemed likely even

THIRD WORLD DEBT

Tony Blair has promised "concrete measures" to reduce the debt burden on the poorest countries. These, however, are unlikely to be anywhere near as ambitious as demanded by aid agencies and the Third World countries involved. The most likely step is a promise to help all highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) to become part of the HIPC initiative agreed at the Lyon G7 summit of 1996, with a focus on countries trying to rebuild after war, and on ensuring aid and export credits are used "productively". Thus far, Burkina Faso, Bolivia, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Guyana, and Uganda have secured firm commitments for relief under the programme. The hope is to extend it to everyone by 2000. Germany is unhappy with more generalised debt relief and there are deep differences between "hawks", who believe debt assistance will do nothing to encourage profligate and corrupt countries to mend their ways, and "doves", for whom

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Paul Vallely meets an aid worker whose parallel insights into the worlds of privilege and poverty have equipped her to monitor the impact of the West's policies on the poor

Princess fired up by a humanitarian cause

THERE are some things you have to keep quiet about if you are an aid worker. Like the fact that you are a princess. And not a patron of Save the Children kind of aid worker, but one who spends most days bumping up and down in the back of a pickup truck for nine hours.

When 28-year-old Mulima Kufekwa Akapelwa returns to her homeland in Zambia the Lozi people call her Bomukwae, which means princess. Mulima, who arrives in Birmingham today for the G8 summit, is mildly embarrassed by the fact.

It is true, she admits, that her grandfather was heir to the paramount chieftain of an empire which stretched hundreds of miles from the border with Angola to the Copper Belt near the Congo. But her father was educated in the colonial era by Presbyterian missionaries and subsequently became, more prosaically, a veterinary officer.

More prosaically, Mulima feels. Which perhaps explains why she has moved into the field of aid and development. She heads a project spon-



Children selling caterpillars and fish in a shanty town in Lusaka

sored by Zambia's Catholic bishops, funded from the United Kingdom by the Catholic aid agency Cafod, to monitor the effect of Third World debt on ordinary people.

It has been a considerable personal journey. The Lozi royal family is still a powerful, privileged and educated élite. It still exercises a residuum of its traditional judicial role. Mulima's upbringing was sheltered. Though her father's work took the family away from the homeland to Livingstone,

where she was born, not far from Victoria Falls, she was sent to the best local school. When she went to university in Lusaka her parents refused to allow her to work during the periods in which her faculty was closed by funding cuts or during the riots provoked when subsidies on the basic food stuffs were cut at the behest of the International Monetary Fund.

It was the field work for her social sciences degree which changed everything. "We were taken off to the rural areas to collect data. Our supervisor would come every two or three weeks to collect our results and bring us vegetables." The life of the ordinary people came as a shock to the princess and her fellow students. After a further degree at Oxford, Mulima returned to Zambia. Her parallel insights into the worlds of privilege and poverty have brought her out of the world of aid into the more political arena of examining how the policies of the Western nations impact adversely on the world's poor.

"To find the money to repay the debts the rich world has forced on

us to restructure our economy. Fees have been introduced in health services and the result is an almost doubling of death among children under five," she said. "Education has effectively been privatised, driving out large numbers of pupils – particularly girls. Today only half of all Zambian children go to school."

But it is more than that. "The IMF policies of structural adjustment are taking a heavy toll among the poorest people," she said. "Privatisation has improved services in some cases. But... it is not a panacea. It has reduced poor farmers' ability to get their crops to market. And instead of delivering the promised foreign investment it has resulted in the asset-stripping of many public-owned businesses or their closure to make way for the goods of the foreign rivals who bought them."

She will say as much to the thousands of activists who will assemble in Birmingham this afternoon to throw a human chain around world leaders at the G8 summit which has Third World debt on its agenda.



Mulima Kufekwa Akapelwa: Embarrassed by her royal lineage

Photographs: Paul Vallely

Zambians pay price of stability

POSTCARD FROM

AFRICA

Paul Vallely

NO ONE could accuse the International Monetary Fund's representative in Zambia of not having a sense of humour. The walls of his office are covered with cartoons from local newspapers lambasting the IMF for its devastating impact on the life of ordinary Zambians.

After days of roughing it in the bush, where 85 per cent of people live below the poverty line, I had put on my suit and gone to see the money men. A breakfast meeting with the IMF was followed by others with a diplomat from one of the creditor countries, the World Bank and a top Zambian civil servant.

I had one basic question. How could the West justify an economic reform designed to maximise debt repayments at a time when thousands more people were dying?

About 25 per cent of Zambia's earnings goes on paying the interest on the debt. Health and other services have been cut to pay for it. Since the cuts were introduced, life expectancy has fallen from 54 to 42 and deaths among the under-fives has risen to 203 from 125 per thousand.

The IMF representative was nervous about an on-the-record conversation. The situation was too delicate for that, he said. I had no more luck at the embassy of one of the main cred-

itor countries. Bilateral aid, I was told, off the record, had been suspended since a failed coup attempt last year. And there were one or two questions about human rights.

But a senior civil servant said: "Whenever we address the issue – with commissions on corruption or human rights – they [the West] move the goalposts and demand something else."

According to the World Bank's man in Zambia, Gedion Njoko, the sufferings of the poor were nothing to do with the policy of Structural Adjustment.

They were the result of poverty and poor economic management by the Zambian authorities. Hard choices had got inflation down from 300 per cent in 1991 to 20 per cent. The economy had stabilised. Now comes the second phase, in which it is hoped investment will arrive.

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LEADING EDGE. In the first of a new series Geoff Watts examines the latest theories on the formation of galaxies and the glue that holds all matter together. Thursday evenings from 21 May, 9.02 - 9.30.

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Rupee falls but PM's popularity goes nuclear

By Peter Popham
in New Delhi

SOBERING slightly from its intoxicating bash at being a superpower – five underground nuclear tests conducted in three days – India yesterday began counting the cost of its new rulers' recklessness.

The rupee fell to an all-time low against the dollar and business confronted the implications of losing \$21bn (£13.5bn) of American money through sanctions, to an economy already deeply stuck in recession. To restore the momentum which drove the economy to unprecedented successes in the past seven years would in any case have taken a concerted government assault on the many remaining areas of stagnation and backwardness. Now it will take a miracle.

The government, however, was still flying on a potent cocktail of international outrage and domestic satisfaction, and prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee decided to take another swig. In an interview with *India Today*, a weekly news magazine,

he confirmed that "India now has a big bomb and is now a nuclear weapons state". He added: "We will not hesitate to use the bomb in self-defence."

Mr Vajpayee did not clarify whether he meant defence against nuclear or conventional attack. Warming to his theme, he went on: "There is no question of India signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Command and control systems [for the nuclear weapons] are in place. The bomb is not intended for peaceful purposes. Celebrations are being organised up and down the country."

The prime minister's main objective appeared to be to continue moving the domestic political goals and thereby keep his opponents on the hop. All the major opposition parties have now endorsed the BJP-led government's stunning initiative, which provoked a euphoric reaction, at least among the urban middle class who had some inkling of what it was all about. On Thursday the Congress Party, which had been in two minds about how to react, finally bowed to

the popular mood when Sonia Gandhi declared that "the nuclear question is a national matter, not a partisan one. On this every Indian stands united".

Congress took pride in the fact that successive Congress governments had ensured, she went on, "that the country's nuclear capability remains up-to-date, so that our security is not compromised".

But Mr Vajpayee's party, the BJP, is an extremist party, and now that it has discovered how to drag the rest of the political class towards it cannot get enough of it. The so-called "ambiguists", the soggy middle of Indian politics, were content until Monday's explosions with the status quo, whereby India possessed nuclear weapons but neither owned nor tested them. But on Tuesday they

woke up to find that their comfortably fuzzy political terrain had disappeared. Either they could sign up to the hard line of the BJP, or do the unthinkable and join the invisibly small rump of the antis.

Now Mr Vajpayee has chosen to squeeze them some more. Optimists among the former ambiguists had their fingers crossed that Monday's tests would lead speedily to India's

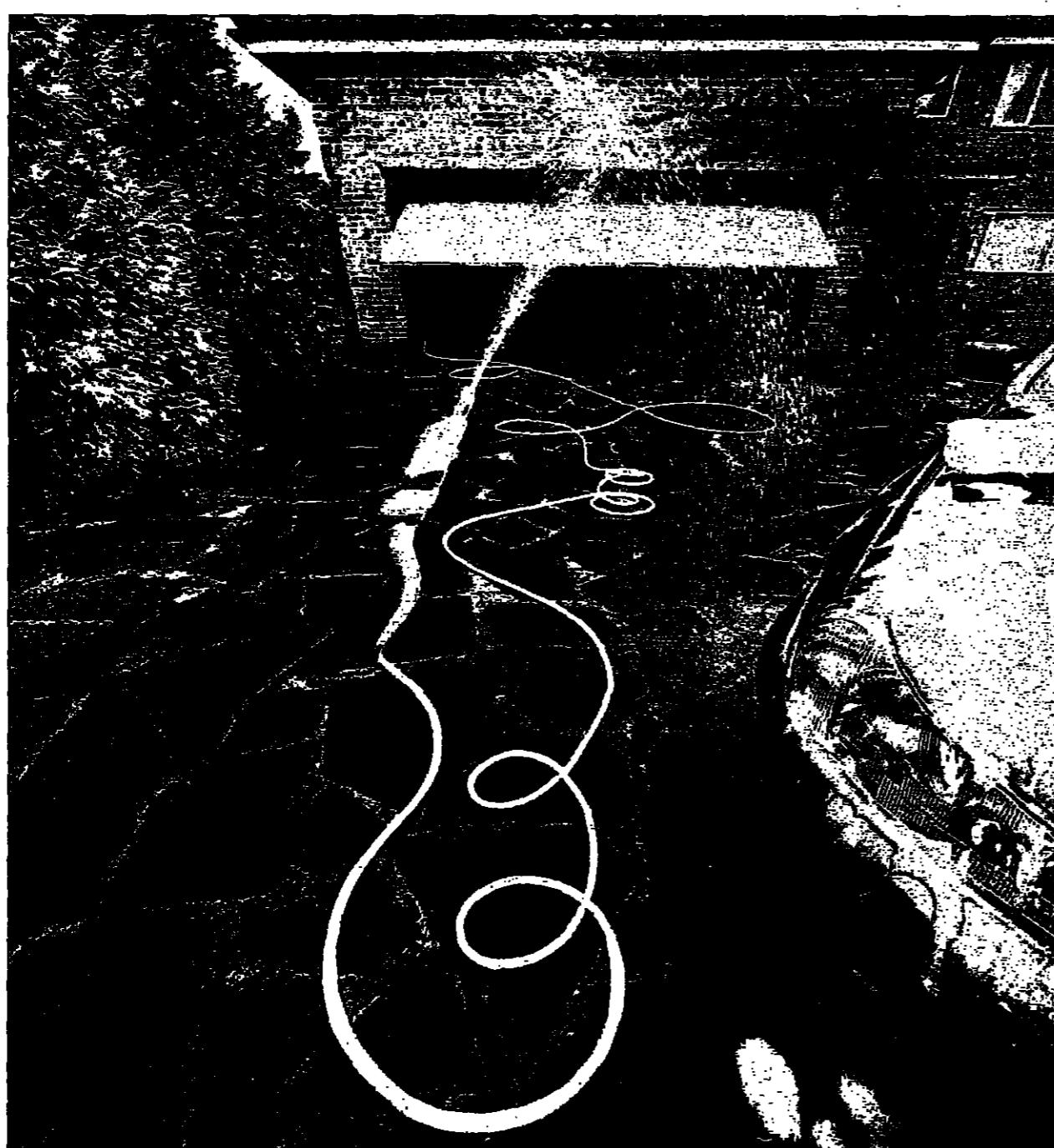
signing the CTBT which India has long denounced as a fraud and a trap. Wednesday's second-round of tests, carried out full in the teeth of international fury, made that much less likely. Now Mr Vajpayee appears to have hit the idea on the head once and for all. His opponents must either follow him to the cliff edge, or retreat to a middle ground that no longer exists.

Demonstrators burn US and Japanese flags in New Delhi in protest at sanctions imposed by President Clinton in the aftermath of this week's Indian nuclear tests. Photograph: Ajit Kumar/AP

The recklessness of the BJP government is all the more remarkable considering it is a minority government which only barely scrapes a majority in parliament thanks to the abstention of a key regional party. But a leader of the RSS, the patriotic paramilitary force which is the sinister parent body of the BJP (and which is believed to have had prior knowledge of the tests), revealed on Thursday that in 1996, the only previous occasion that the BJP held power, they were only prevented from carrying out nuclear tests when the United States got wind of their intentions and managed to convince that they lost a crucial confidence vote in parliament. They were thus knocked out of power after a mere 13 days.

Meanwhile, in Islamabad speculation was rife that Pakistan would carry out nuclear tests of its own within a couple of days. To try to deflect the Pakistan government from this course of action, a high-level American delegation yesterday flew into the capital for talks.

Diplomatic sources said Pakistan should be able to extract a good price for exercising restraint, perhaps even securing the delivery of F16 fighter planes purchased from America 10 years ago which never arrived. However, the pressures on prime minister Nawaz Sharif to pick up the Indian gauntlet were intense. It is doubtful whether he will be able to withstand them.



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مكالمة من الأصل

Kosovo's first step to peace

PRESIDENT Slobodan Milosevic and the leader of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians met for the first time yesterday, calling their United States-backed talks an initial step toward peace in the province.

"It seems there is readiness to move ahead toward a peaceful political solution to the Kosovo issue," Mr Rugova said. In the province, heavy fighting and explosions were reported for a second day in the area south of Pristina, Kosovo's capital; there was no report of casualties.

— AP, Belgrade

China holds Tibetan monks

CHINESE authorities arrested 15 Tibetan Buddhist monks after a demonstration at a remote monastery against Chinese rule in Tibet, a monitoring group said. The protests in the first two weeks of March at the Rongpo Rabten monastery occurred after Chinese officials tried to force its monks to denounce the Dalai Lama. Communist leaders in Tibet started the denunciation campaign against the Dalai Lama two years ago to purge his supporters from monasteries.

— AP, Peking

Trans-sexual found stabbed

THE FIRST Honduran to have a sex change and to be legally recognised as a woman was found stabbed to death early Friday, along with a housekeeper. Sigrida Shantall Pastor Arguelles, 50, a dentist, underwent sex-change surgery in the United States in 1976. For the next 21 years, she fought to be legally recognised as a woman. She won last November when the government identified her as a woman on her voter registration card.

— AP, Tegucigalpa

Christian protest in Lahore

POLICE clashed with thousands of Christians calling for the repeal of blasphemy laws that led to the suicide of a Catholic bishop last week. Witnesses said police used tear gas and sticks to control a huge demonstration in the Punjabi capital, Lahore, against laws under which blasphemers can be executed. About 25 people were injured and more than a dozen were arrested. The Christian community called for Friday to be observed as a day of mourning to show their anger over the bishop's death and the laws he died trying to repeal.

— Reuters, Lahore

Monastery's treasure trove

WORKERS renovating a monastery have found valuable antique books and treasures walled in by Franciscan monks to hide them from the communists. The trove was found at Gyengyoes, 50 miles east of Budapest. The most valuable book is the Bible printed in 1462 by Johann Fust, Johanna Gutenberg's business partner.

— AP, Budapest

Miss Universe for president

A MAJOR Venezuelan political party endorsed a former Miss Universe for president this week, a move she hopes will reverse the party's slide in the polls and catapult her to the nation's top office. Irene Saez, 36, mayor of a wealthy Caracas municipality, became the official candidate of the Social Christian COPEI Party, one of Latin America's oldest and best-known political movements.

— AP, Caracas

Ethiopians sent into an Israeli minefield

Immigrants are being sent to religious Jewish settlements, reports Patrick Cockburn

IN THE middle of the Jewish settlement of Ofra on the West Bank there are strange new arrivals. Some of the women wear flowery dresses and carry their babies on their backs. The men have skullcaps, but do not speak Hebrew. They are Falash Mura, Ethiopian Christians who say they were once Jews and plan to reconvert.

They arrived last month in Israel from Addis Ababa and the government immediately bussed 140 to Ofra, a settlement of religious Jews built on land captured by Israel in 1967.

"It is a provocation of the government done to show to the settlers that [Benjamin] Netanyahu wants settlements rather than the peace process," said Addisu Massala, the only Ethiopian member of the Knesset. "People are taken from the airport to the occupied territories. Everyday they ring me up to say they don't want to be there." He says the Ethiopians want to be in Tel Aviv or Haifa, where many have relatives and it is easier to get jobs.

The Ethiopians seem to sense that they have arrived in a political minefield. Dessalegne Gessesse, 58, and fully Jewish, spent 29 years of his life as a tax inspector in Addis Ababa before he arrived in Ofra. At first he says he would prefer to live in Haifa on the coast, but after a conversation in Amharic with other Ethiopians he changes his mind and says he does not mind where he lives: "I don't care if it is Hebron or Gaza so long as I am here. I am a free Jew in my own country."

**It's a provocation.
People are taken
from the airport
to the occupied
territories**



This is what the settlers of Ofra want to bear. Along with three other settlements in the occupied territories they are taking the Falash Mura in return for a government subsidy. They also are making an ideological point at the very moment Mr Netanyahu is in Washington, discussing a limited Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

They are not only increasing the number of settlers, but demonstrating, for the new immigrant, Ofra is as much part of the land of Israel as Tel Aviv.

The Falash Mura themselves

previous Israeli governments, remained behind. Most trekked from the north of the country and have lived near the Israeli embassy in Addis Ababa for the past seven years. Nobody knows how many more there are in the Ethiopian countryside.

Ami Bergman, who helped them with food and medical assistance on behalf of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, thinks there may be another 15,000 Falash Mura.

They are friendly people, with beaming smiles, who wave at anybody they do not know. Oren Tagait, an Ethiopian Jew already living in Israel, who is teaching the children basic Hebrew, says: "Their main problem is getting used to our food." Yaakov Alamo, also an immigrant from Ethiopia in the past and now a maintenance man at Ofra, said: "At first everything is a little hard bit, but they are an accommodating people." He admits that some of the newly arrived immigrants do not know they are in a settlement.

The settlers are sensitive to the accusation that they are manipulating the newly arrived Ethiopians. As we were asking Mr Gessesse how he felt about being in a settlement in the occupied territories, Michal Finkel, a community co-ordinator in Ofra, said: "It is journalists asking questions who make the problems. He doesn't care where he is. It wasn't his decision to

come here." She says, rightly, that the government made the decision to send the Falash Mura to Ofra.

Yossi Shlurin, spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which organised the immigration of the

Ethiopians, says only 1 or 2 per cent of them are being sent to the settlements. He said: "Most want to live in Israel because it is easier to get jobs and they are closer to their relatives."

Their numbers are minus-

cule compared with the 155,000 Jewish settlers and 1.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank.

But by sending the Falash Mura to Ofra, the Israeli government makes two points: it wants to increase the number of settlers on

the West Bank and it will treat it as part of Israel. Addisu Massala says the Israeli government is exploiting the Falash Mura to further the ends of its "political ideology". He says they are in a uniquely vulnerable position. Despite their skullcaps they have not yet converted — they would say reconverted — to Judaism. He insists that, despite their smiles, the Ethiopians in Ofra "are very much afraid".

French right forges pact against Le Pen

By John Lichfield
in Paris

AFTER seven weeks of ripping one another apart, the parties, factions and self-regarding personalities of the French right have agreed to form a new political alliance. The pact, to be confirmed by the grass roots, could mark a historic turning in the quarrelsome history of France's right wing, opening the way to the creation of a single French "conservative" party.

On the other hand, it might prove to be the starting-gong for vicious faction-fighting. The proposed new grouping, to be called, simply, l'Alliance, will include both President Jacques Chirac's neo-Gaullist party, the RPR, and the five factions within the virtually defunct, centre-right federation, the UDF.

The declared intention is to unite all the forces on the French right who refuse to have anything to do with the xenophobic and ultra-right National Front (FN).

It will be the first time the Gaullists have entered a formal alliance with other parties.

Previously, they would go no further than a loose electoral pact with the UDF. At first glance, the deal would be good news for the neo-Gaullists, founder, Mr Chirac. If the alliance prospers, it virtually guarantees that he will be the sole



Philippe Séguin: President of RPR in secret talks

candidate of the "traditional" right in the next presidential election in four years' time.

Both the UDF and the Gaullists have been severely weakened by the unauthorised local deals made by some of their provincial leaders with Jean-Marie Le Pen's FN following regional elections last March. Up to the middle of this week, it seemed that the traditional right would split into at least four warring groups: the Gaullists, a "centre" party; a Thatcherite "liberal" party; and a fast-growing new party called La Droite (the Right), which has declared its readiness to go into permanent partnership with the FN.

The agreement came out of the blue after secret negotiations between the RPR's president,

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Iranians march against dissident

CROWDS marched in the Iranian city of Isfahan yesterday to denounce backers of a dissident Muslim cleric and support the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

State radio said demonstrators carried banners condemning supporters of Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri as "internal elements of world arrogance [the West]". The radio did not report any clashes. Ayatollah Montazeri's supporters had urged

people to chant slogans demanding freedom of speech and thought.

Ayatollah Montazeri was placed under house arrest and prevented from teaching after he questioned Ayatollah Khamenei's authority in a speech in November.

The radio said, without explaining, that the Isfahan prayers were led by a cleric other than Ayatollah Jalaleddin Taheri, a moderate who usually leads Friday prayers.

— Reuters

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Looters trapped in their own inferno



Rescuers and spectators with some of the remains laid out in front of the gutted department store. Photograph: AP

IT IS six hours since the fire went out, the clean-up job is well under way, and only fragments remain to be scooped up from the Yoga department store. The salvage workers have seen much worse than this, but they handle the pieces gingerly as they carry them out and drop them into charred trays at the top of the steps.

Here they are on public display: a trickle of people approach and sort through the pieces looking for one that they recognise. A man helps out by holding them up for inspection, or turning them over with the end of a burned stick: a wrist, an elbow joint, something that might be a thigh or buttock, and a clenched pair of burned human hands.

On the wrist is an intact metal watch, its hands stopped forever at the moment on Wednesday afternoon when Jakarta's people started to pay the price for the mayhem in which they have indulged this week.

Until yesterday morning, despite two days of looting, smashing and burning, there had been remarkably few confirmed casualties, no more than 25 dead in three days. But you

cannot sack a city of Jakarta's size without destroying human lives along with it, as the horrible and ironic story of the Yoga department store shows.

As many as 200 people died here on Wednesday, most of them looters trapped by their own fire.

By yesterday afternoon they had pieced together only 88 at the Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital in central Jakarta.

Fifteen of them were identifiable. Most of the rest have been reduced to the lumps of flesh, bone and jewellery in the black trays.

The tragedy here began no differently from thousands of other acts of looting all over the city. All through Wednesday morning mobs of poor Jakartans assembled spontaneously and began their pillage in dozens of neighbourhoods all over the city.

There was a dangerous, skittish atmosphere among the crowd, which was seized by sudden panics and surges. After milling aimlessly in the middle of the street, a cry would go up and hundreds of people would sprint in one direction, either towards a new target or away from an imagined threat.

The scenes inside, after the looters realised that they were trapped, can scarcely be imagined.

Haji Eko saw eight people

jump out of the windows. Only five of them were carried away alive, all of them unconscious or with broken limbs.

Apart from looters, the victims seem to have included shopkeepers protecting their businesses, and ordinary shopkeepers caught in the riot.

Three sisters and a brother lingered weeping outside the shopping centres yesterday afternoon, looking for some sign of their youngest sister, Chaerunisa, who went shopping on Wednesday and never came home.

"I got back with my husband from Saudi Arabia last week," said her sister, Faiziah, "and my mother told her to go out and buy some Arab cheese for us to eat. Later the neighbours told us that there is trouble in the department store."

"We ran there straight away, but the fire was so big. We waited all night, but no one could escape from it. She was 17, just a young girl, and I had seen her for just one day after two years away from her."

The fire burned until 9am yesterday.

Mobs in at least three other places in Jakarta yesterday set fire to other shopping centres, which serve as something of a symbol of President Suharto's Indonesia.

During the years of high growth which ended last year, the glass-covered edifices went up all over Jakarta.

Inside, the rich minority spent their wealth. But most Indonesians could do no more than press their noses against the mirrored glass. This week, they forced their way inside.

"Of course I blame the rioters," said Faiziah. "But they are angry with the government and with the politicians. Their anger spilled on to the department store."

"If we had a government that listened to us, there wouldn't be a riot like this. More people will die, more like my sister, unless Suharto goes."

Chinese suffer for their success as mobs target the 'Jews of the East'

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

CHINESE families are flocking to Indonesian airports, desperate to flee as their shops and homes are looted and burned to the ground. Their fears are understandable — being an ethnic Chinese in Indonesia today is to be in a state of mortal danger.

Yet again, the Chinese are the scapegoat for the problems of a South-East Asian nation in trouble. In Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, tiny Brunei and Vietnam — where they provided the backbone of the "boat people" exodus — Chinese communities have been subject to persecution. Partly it is because they are different, partly because they are successful and, in some cases, because they have acted as revolutionaries in their adopted countries.

The comparison with the European Jews is striking. Ironically it was in Thailand, where the Chinese are most assimilated, that the term "Jews of the East" was coined by King Vajiravudh in a vitriolic racist essay written in 1915.

In Indonesia, where the Chinese are no more than 3 per cent of the population, the well-established Chinese community has provided the scapegoat both for popular discontent and the cynical manipulation of governments to deflect the blame for their mismanagement.

In the present crisis the government of President Suharto has done little to protect the Chinese. Although he is closely associated with a number of prominent Chinese businessmen it is suspected that he would be content to let the Chinese bear the brunt of popular discontent with his regime.

Historically, the problems in Indonesia were exacerbated by

Peking in 1959, which launched a campaign to repatriate its compatriots. Suffering discrimination in their adopted home, many Indonesian Chinese answered the call, leaving with little more than the clothes they were wearing. The wave of immigration reinforced the feeling that the Chinese were not really Indonesian.

The 1965 coup which brought President Suharto to power made matters worse as the Chinese were seen as allies of the local Communist Party.

Some were indeed Communists but most were not, though they were not spared in the bloodbath which followed.

The community has provided the scapegoat for popular discontent

Anti-Chinese sentiment peaked in 1966, particularly in northern Sumatra, where it is again strong today. No one knows how many Chinese were killed in rioting but the massacres have left a lasting impression on the community, which fears that history will repeat itself.

In Indonesia, as elsewhere in South-East Asia, the Chinese have changed their names to blend in with the rest of the population. The Chinese seem to know who is Chinese. The high-profile businessmen are particularly well known for being Chinese. Not only do they give the impression that the whole community is rich, but their businesses tend to be concentrated in retailing and banking, sectors which have the most direct connection with the public at large.

Unpopular regimes have some reason to fear the Chinese because they have often led revolutionary movements in Asia.

José Rizal, hero of the Philippine independence movement, was primarily of Chinese descent. The leadership of the Communist Party in Malaysia was predominantly Chinese and the leaders of the movement which split the Malaysian federation were Chinese. Indeed, they created a predominantly Chinese state next door in the form of Singapore.

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Richard Lloyd Parry in Jakarta sees the grisly aftermath of a

free-for-all in which the lure of booty led to 200 deaths



Hospital workers in Jakarta with body bags. Most victims had been burnt beyond recognition. Photograph: Reuters

jump out of the windows. Only five of them were carried away alive, all of them unconscious or with broken limbs.

Apart from looters, the victims seem to have included shopkeepers protecting their businesses, and ordinary shopkeepers caught in the riot.

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مكالمات من الأصل

Indonesians fear approach of 'day the Earth shakes'

David Foll, who spent a year in Java studying music, writes of his anxiety for a people and a country he came to love

IN THE early Nineties I lived for nine months in the city of Solo, central Java, where I was studying classical Javanese music. I grew to love the Indonesian people for their grace, gentleness and almost universal kindness.

During my last weeks there, I witnessed the campaigns for the 1992 elections. The complexities of Indonesian politics had been reduced to a choice among three political parties (the government party and the small Muslim and Democratic parties), three numbers (1, 2 or 3), three symbols (a banana tree, a buffalo head and a star) and three colours (yellow, red and green).

There was never any doubt about who would win. Quotas of votes were set for village heads to return if they wanted any share in development projects, and all civil servants had to vote for the government party, which received "only" 68 per cent of the vote.

On specially designated days one party was allowed to rally in the area. Supporters, mostly young, put on T-shirts of the correct colour, piled on to motorbikes (sometimes three at a time) or pick-up trucks and massed aggressively in the streets.

"Stay clear," my landlady told me. "Don't go out. If anyone asks you which party you support, you do like this." And a mask fell over her usually animated face, which was instantly inoffensive and blank, with only the vaguest of smiles.

Travelling in a minibus from Solo to Yogyakarta, I was caught in a succession of such rallies. We repeatedly had to stop at the roadside to let what seemed a tribal army pass us, chanting slogans, waving banners.

Leaders and thumping on the roof and sides of our minibus, which, thank God, had tinted windows so that the foreigner inside could not be seen.

What impressed me most was the pointlessness of these events, as well as the explosive, barely contained energies of these charming people who had become a monster with many heads. They were profoundly frustrated and they had no channel for their political aspirations.

Always present beneath the smiles was this sense of fear, of the state, the army, the police, of anyone in authority. But there was a deeper fear, too: that Indonesia would have to go again through the nightmare of 1965-6, when perhaps half a

Suharto controlled the forms of democracy like a Javanese puppeteer; they were as insubstantial as shadows

million people were killed after a failed coup against Sukarno, the first president of independent Indonesia. Communist Party members were hunted down and butchered, along with Chinese Indonesians (Sukarno had aligned himself with Peking, and anyway the Chinese minority always get it in the neck when there is trouble) plus, in the fields, those poor farmers who had joined the campaign for land reform. Suharto rose to his pre-eminent position through this bloodshed.

No one would talk willingly about this time. As a guest in their country I never wanted to press my friends about it. But he claimed the age-old prerogative of unquestioned power, slavish respect and huge personal wealth.

But by Christmas this prosperity was tottering. Only a few could afford the luxuries. Then came the forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, partly caused by the effects of El Niño, but partly by First Family business activities — timber, plantations, and, crazily, the reclamation of mangrove swamps for rice fields.

Now there is appalling public disorder. The *wahyu*, the divine radiance of powerful kings, has deserted Suharto. With it gone, there is no reason to support him any more. But it is difficult to see who the *wahyu* will pass to, since Suharto has disposed of all credible opposition.

It is heartbreaking to watch on television such scenes of destruction in a city I love. Yesterday I phoned friends in Solo. Even in that gracious city a department store, five minutes from my old house, had been torched.

I fear for the lives of Chinese friends. I can only hope that the high walls and metal gateways with which they surround their homes will protect them.

so, Australia has attracted soon over its willingness to turn a blind eye to Indonesia's human rights abuses in East Timor.

If the riots spin further out of control, and more anti-Suharto demonstrators are shot dead, Australia's stand will be put to the gravest test. Critics have called on Mr Howard's government to accept that Indonesia is in the throes of political change and to encourage the emergence of democracy.

Marcus Einfeld, a judge and former president of Australia's human rights commission, said on Thursday: "When democracy does come... what will [Indonesians and East Timorese] think of Australia which... stood by in silence for over 20 years as the poor grew poorer and thousands of East Timorese were murdered, raped and oppressed?"

Anxious Australia watches northern neighbour unravel

By Robert Milliken
in Sydney



John Howard: 'Deeply disturbed' by the riots

AUSTRALIA has been shaken by the crisis in Indonesia, its nearest northern neighbour. Once feared as a possible invader, Indonesia has more recently become Australia's closest defence partner in Asia. Now, the apparent death throes of the Suharto regime have reawakened old anxieties about turbulence on its doorstep.

Governments in Canberra have spent the best part of a decade forming close ties with President Suharto's regime culminating in a security treaty that the two countries signed in late 1995. Indonesia is Australia's second biggest export market in South-East Asia. When Indonesia's economy started collapsing last year, Australia contributed A\$1bn towards an International Monetary Fund rescue package.

The deaths of students and the rioting have sent shudders through Canberra, provoking deep concern particularly about the role of the military if

the riots spin further out of control, and more anti-Suharto demonstrators are shot dead, Australia's stand will be put to the gravest test. Critics have called on Mr Howard's government to accept that Indonesia is in the throes of political change and to encourage the emergence of democracy.

Marcus Einfeld, a judge and former president of Australia's human rights commission, said on Thursday: "When democracy does come... what will [Indonesians and East Timorese] think of Australia which... stood by in silence for over 20 years as the poor grew poorer and thousands of East Timorese were murdered, raped and oppressed?"

Australia's anxiety reflects its attempt over the past 30 years to come to grips with its position as a democratic country of 18 million living next door to the world's fourth most populous country and biggest Islamic state. In their bid to dispel fears of "invasion from the north", Canberra's policy-makers have gone out of their way to turn a country once seen as an enemy into a favoured friend. In doing

so, Australia has attracted soon over its willingness to turn a blind eye to Indonesia's human rights abuses in East Timor.

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The fashion victims of football

What should a boy wear for the Cup Final? Not Hugo Boss, for sure. By Tamsin Blanchard



Katherine Hamnett thinks she knows the best way a man should dress (left) and it isn't how Liverpool did it in 1996 (above)

THIS afternoon when Arsenal and Newcastle go for a walkabout on the Wembley pitch before the big match, they'll be wearing Hugo Boss suits, both sides united in their passion for one designer label.

Although most supporters couldn't give a flying football about the designer name on their team's inside jacket pockets, the dressing of football stars has become big business for fashion companies. To have a football player endorse your clothes is worth more in advertising revenue than all the chisel-jawed models in Milan.

Giorgio Armani scored a hat-trick when he had the bright idea of employing Liverpool goalie David James to show off his magnificent thighs wearing nothing more than a pair of briefs. However, the designer was given a yellow card when he dressed the entire team for the FA Cup final in 1996.

What singles out the match in the memories of the most die-hard fans were the official team suits that Liverpool wore before the match. "David James looked superb in his, obviously because he was modelling for Armani anyway," argues one Liverpool fan. "It depended who was wearing them." Another fan has still not got over the shock: "I held my face in my hands in shame. From the moment they

stepped out in those suits, I knew we were going to lose."

Whichever side you're on, footballers' suits can be an emotive – and all too often comic – subject. The days when the team went down to their local Burtons to be fitted for a smart suit for the big day are over. Footballers have become the menswear equivalent of Hollywood movie stars at the Oscars, prey to big corporate designers who can supply suits free of charge.

Hugo Boss can no doubt throw in a few dozen boxes of aftershave, and a pair of boxes as a sweetener for Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish. But a team that is worth

as much as Arsenal can well afford to buy their own suits. And it's time they supported local talent.

One local designer is Katherine Hamnett. Her menswear is already popular with the football fraternity, but who better to design the Gunnery kit than a designer who lives – and works – within spitting distance of the club? She could do a great line in *Reservoir Dogs* style slim-line two-pieces for the boys (although she would have to remember they don't like flat front trousers because they sit too tightly on their thighs).

Likewise, Charlie Allen, the Highbury-based tailor who was born only 100 yards from the

ground and still lives 200 yards from it. "It's outrageous. Both sides wearing Hugo Boss. Why can't they pick an English designer?" he asks. Needless to say, he is an Arsenal supporter and will be closing his shop at 3pm this afternoon. "No wonder the Germans beat us at football. We're wearing their suits."

Despite the fact that the suits would have been required at short notice, Mr Allen is adamant that he could have supplied the team with their own bespoke suit at the reduced price of £750 each – including shirt and tie. "It has to be a suit. They're wearing dark grey, but I'd put them in red and black shot mohair – Zegna fabric – very light and half-lined," says Allen. They would also wear a black shirt with a black tie shot with red stripes that you could see from a distance. The suit would be single-breasted, three buttoned and with flat-fronted trousers. "Instead, they've gone for a name," says Allen.

Small companies, however local, simply cannot compete. When Nigel Curtiss, the British menswear designer dressed Manchester United for the 1996 final, he made thirty suits for the team, the subs, and their manager, Alex Ferguson.

"It's a prestigious thing to do. The fact that you've suited up the

most famous footballers in the world is worth a lot." However, Curtiss was not paid for the privilege. He split the costs with the Manchester menswear shop, Garcon, which got the business in the first place through regular customers Andy Cole, Paul Ince, and Ryan Giggs. Likewise, Newcastle may not have been loyal to a local designer, but Kenny Dalglish put in a call to the team's favourite suit shop, Cruise Flannels in the Toon's equivalent of Bond Street.

Nigel Cabourn, the Geordie designer who lives in a windmill in the centre of the city might have loved the chance to dress the boys, but the task went to Boss. Navy suits and cream shirts with cutaway collar were shipped over from Germany and although the team is not officially sponsored by the label, they are happy to be as helpful and generous as they can.

Locally, however, it is Cruise that will benefit from the increase in business. Designer menswear is worth in excess of £46 million in the UK and Cruise will be getting their fair share.

Come the World Cup however, Germany can keep their Hugo Boss. England have gone for some of the best made suits in the world. They're British and they're by Paul Smith.

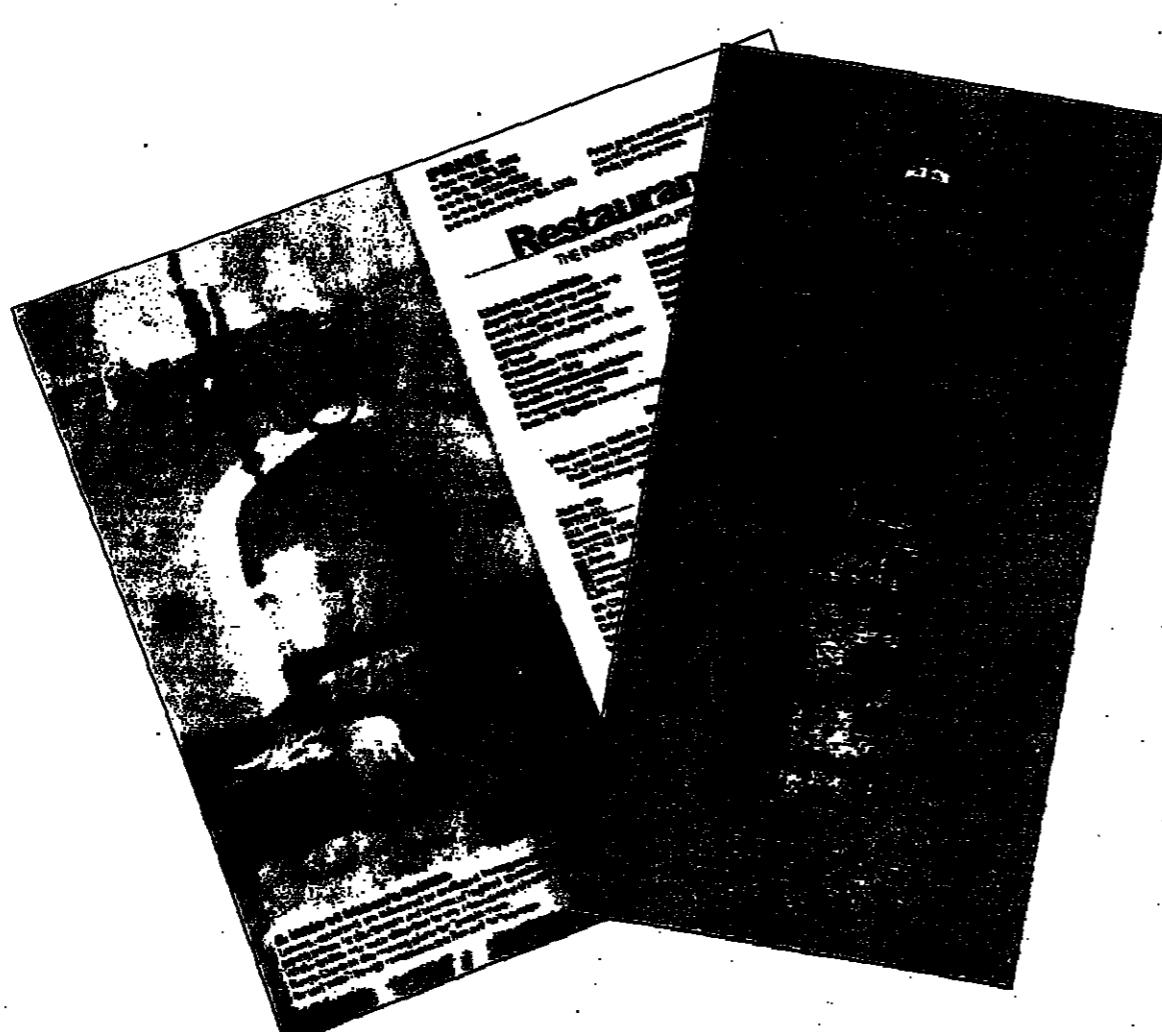


Arsenal's Steve Bould (left) and David Seaman model Hugo Boss suits

Photograph: Michael Stephens/PA

FREE SUPPLEMENT

INSIDE LISBON, INSIDE THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



If you would like to know all the very best bars, shops, restaurants and sights in Lisbon, get the 24-page Insider's Guide. Free with the Independent on Sunday this week.

**INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY**

FAITH AND REASON

Why Tony, Bill and Helmut can't ignore the chain gang

Politicians and archbishops must not turn their back on the scandal of Third World debt says Paul Handley, editor of the Church Times

THE Jubilee 2000 protesters who plan to form the six-mile-long human chain round the G8 summit in Birmingham at 3 o'clock this afternoon will have to stretch their arms just that little bit longer. Sadly, two of their supporters, George Carey and Basil Hume, have somebody else to support at precisely the same time. I hope Arsenal and Newcastle United are grateful. I don't suppose Malawi, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Bolivia and the rest of the teams at the bottom of the global division will be.

In one sense, it won't matter. The two church leaders have said enough about Third World debt to show that their hearts are in the right place, and the Jubilee 2000 organisers need the Churches' support too much to start publicly knocking their leaders. And clearly, the human chain is, in the end, just a bit of symbolism. Still, what a missed opportunity to show the country what real sacrifice means.

So, the Jubilee 2000 campaign starts the afternoon two-all down. Or rather, ten-nil down, since the G8 leaders aren't actually going to be inside the Birmingham International Convention Centre today.

Security considerations

have made the Foreign Office a bit cagey, but it looks as if Bill Clinton, Helmut Kohl et al will have departed earlier for a retreat in a stately home in Shropshire, returning to Birmingham late in the day, just in time not to hear Nigel Kennedy play for them.

It will be like a gigantic game of "The farmer's in his den", with one exception: the farmer won't be in his den. Talk about symbolic: it's an experience that will be familiar to the nations which bear the burden of the heaviest debt – calling on their creditors to ask for leniency and finding them out for the day.

Despite all this, the protesters who do turn up need not worry unduly. If the numbers expected turn up, the final score will be 35,000-10. And they have already had their effect. The matter of Third World debt is now firmly on the summit agenda, due, in large part, to their efforts

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Turning debt into a black and white issue has meant that politicians have had to take notice, and they, in turn, have put pressure on the financiers

(and not, as the *Guardian* put it yesterday, Tony Blair's). Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, this week called it "good politics".

Don't expect a revolution. Short was hinting: the matrix of international agreements surrounding IMF and World Bank debt repayments was too complex to dismantle without a big upset; but, encouraged by the campaign, Britain would be pressing for a serious relaxation of the conditions including, for instance,

special treatment for countries recovering from war. If agreed, these proposals would, in effect, turn a 400m hurdles into a 100m hurdles: helpful, positive, reasonable – but not yet the Millennium gesture the campaigners are calling for. So, how do we explain the discrepancy? Were the politics not, in the end, good enough?

Partly, of course, it comes down to the protesters' need to oversimplify in order to gather support. Ending debt by the year 2000 is just such a strong concept; suggesting a reasonable improvement in the IMF/World Bank requirements for debtor countries isn't. Imagine the campaigners taking to the street "What do we want? Gradual improvements. When do we want them? In due course."

Turning debt into a black and white (or black and red) issue has meant that politicians have had to take notice, and they, in turn, have put pressure on the financiers

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politicians interested only in keeping their electors happy have had to take notice, and they, in turn, have put pressure on the financiers.

But if we admit to oversimplification, we ought to acknowledge the corresponding process of obfuscation that went on before. High infant mortality, poor education, low investment and absent infrastructures in the poorest nations have been blamed, variously, on poor government, corruption, natural disasters, over-

population, and just plain poverty.

To rub salt into the wounds, the Western creditors have, in the past, demanded that some or all of these be put right before rescheduling (not cancelling, mind) those countries' debt.

The idea that the servicing of this debt might itself be the chief reason for some of these troubles seems genuinely not to have occurred to anyone until relatively recently – except, of course, to the debtor countries themselves, but who listened to them?

We were told, or we assumed, that the debt was just a natural part of world economics; we were told that the poorer countries were being helped by the rescheduling programmes; we were told that the sums involved might destabilise the high street banks. We weren't told about the blossoming interest; nor about the 21 million children who will die before 2000 from preventable diseases or famine.

This is why people in the West are angry.

We feel we've been duped: that while we were congratulating ourselves on how much we raised for charity, somebody somewhere was siphoning back nine times as much, in our names. Without realising it, we have been guilty of injustice towards the most vulnerable peoples in the world. We find ourselves in need of forgiveness; and as our Lord taught us, our own forgiveness is linked (chained) to our readiness to forgive our debtors. Half the world in physical peril, the other half in peril spiritually: seen in this light, spending a dull afternoon in Birmingham is a small price to pay.

This is what the world leaders – and maybe one or two church leaders – still have to appreciate.

A WEEK IN RADIO

THERE ARE so many ways of damaging children - we bully them, we coddle them, we spoil them and we flatter them. We wreck their confidence, we fill their heads with stupid fantasies, we give them our own terrible examples to follow, or we leave them alone in front of the television. We even tell them what life is really like.

The difficulty of knowing which things hurt children was brought home in the first part of *Let the Rumpus Begin!* (Radio 4, Monday to Friday), a series in which Michael Rosen discussed the subversiveness of children's literature.

On Monday, he discussed the book from which the title is derived (though it is a misquotation): Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. This much-loved nursery classic, about a small boy who reacts to a row with his mother by sailing away to a land full of monsters, whom he tames by the power of his eyes, was condemned on publication as terrifying and "psychologically damaging".

Rosen had dug up some brilliant examples of child-centred idiocy. Among other things, it was suggested that because Max is sent to bed without any supper, the book might make sensitive children afraid of being deprived of basic sustenance.

A fascinating programme, but, oddly, it passed without comment over the book's most disturbing moment: as Max prepares to sail back home, the wild things implore him to stay with the words "We'll eat you up - we love you so!" Even as an adult, I am left feeling slightly queasy by that line, which introduces a note of threat into love and security.

The idea that a picture book can hurt children was put into some sort of perspective by *Suffer the Little Children* (Radio 4, Tuesday), Gail Foley's report on the public inquiry into sexual abuse of children in state-run homes in North Wales.

Foley mentioned early on that the inquiry has received little attention in the press, and that is a scandal. But this programme wasn't the best antidote. It wanted the listener to be shocked but was unwilling to be shocking. To be fair, I cannot imagine what a programme worthy of this subject would be like. Perhaps cruelty to children is a topic that can't be looked at directly.

In *Voice* (Radio 3, Tuesday), the tenor Ian Bostridge sang Britten's "canonic" *Abraham and Isaac* together with the boy soprano Edward Downes.

At one point, inviting his son to be sacrificed, Abraham sings: "Come hither my child, thou art so sweet/ Thou must be bound both hands and feet." This image of murderous love was more piercing than anything achieved by *Suffer the Little Children*: a sideways glance that revealed more than the hard, straight stare.

Deborah Moggach reveals her ongoing fascination with the collapse of the family in the new serial 'Close Relations'. By Jasper Rees

NO WRITER is quite so ecological as Deborah Moggach. She has two dramas on television this year, a saga on each popular channel. For *Seesaw*, which was on ITV in March, she recycled the script from her own novel *Close Relations*, which begins on BBC1 tomorrow, she reused as a novel once she had completed the script. And yet for all her careful husbanding of resources - 12 novels and five television dramas - Moggach is not quite the household name she might be.

This may be because no one knows quite where to place her. Even in appearance, she sends out a mess of signals. One year shy of 50, she is gawkily tall, like a ball-breaking Virago novelist. But the scruffy bohemian mane: is that airport bestseller's hair? In fact, she's somewhere in the middle. The boarding-school laugh and the posh vowels mark her out as the metropolitan cousin of Joanna Trollope, and that is roughly where you find her on the literary map, neatly bisecting Booker and bonkbuster.

Moggach's subject is the rickety edifice we call the family, which she comes at armed with both a wrecking ball and an insatiable curiosity to note the particular way it collapses. Moggach may as well have taken Tolstoy's dictum that no two unhappy families are alike as the epigraph to her career. The tension in her work derives from her inability to decide whether or not the family as an institution is in inexorable crisis. "I've got two opinions. One is that a family is a fragile thing that has been blasted to pieces, and the other is that actually families are surprisingly resilient and will adapt like some new form of germ to changed circumstances, and it will re-form in different permutations but actually is quite stubborn and strong. I can't decide between those two things, but I constantly write about the chaos of it."

Consider the chaos in *Close Relations*.

Gordon, a builder, and his wife Dorothy have three daughters variously scattered throughout the landscape of maturing womanhood. Louise is a rich country housewife, Pru a publisher stuck in a demeaning affair, while Maddy is just back from two years roaming Africa. Before anyone can say *Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, we're up to our armpits in a quagmire of broiling passion in which everyone is excavating the underwear of the person you least expect them to.

Up in town, Maddy finds out what it's like to have her breasts nibbled, while the



casually racist Gordon hops into bed with the young black nurse who cares for him after his heart attack. Meanwhile, down in the country the drippy keeper of the doomed corner shop has a hopeless crush on local chanteuse Louise, and her horse-mad teenage daughter has the hots for the horny-handed blacksmith.

Pru, the only member of the family who brings a complicated emotional life into the story ready-made, entangles it further when she jumps into bed with her lover and his wife. (This may be the place to mention a

bizarre coincidence of casting: Pru is played by Amanda Redman, her lover by Lorcan Cranitch, and both are best known on television for playing characters called Beck).

Moggach's own experiences in the field of marital breakdown can be seen as involuntary research. Out of perhaps 200 people in her circle of acquaintance, she claims she knows of only three successful long-term marriages. "One of my measures is that if they come to dinner and I hear them talking as they come up the path, they've still got things to say to each other." Her par-

ents, who are both writers, failed this particular test after three decades of marriage, and have since remarried. Her own marriage lasted 14 years, after which she spent 10 years co-habiting at weekends with Mel Calman, the *Times* cartoonist. Then three years ago he died in circumstances that, again, no novelist would dare invent: he had a fatal heart attack while watching a Brian de Palma film in the Empire, Leicester Square.

"It was during *Carlo's Way*," she says, "which is a very violent film. A man's throat was cut at the beginning and I think that's

Moggach (left): the fiction and the facts of her life are intertwined, although she has dealt with subjects, such as lesbianism in 'Close Relations', of which she has no personal experience. Photograph: Neville Elder

what did it. I don't know why we went to it because he hated violent films. But we wanted to watch Al Pacino and there was nothing else on. They took him to the hospital but I knew he was dead in the cinema."

Three months later she started living with a Hungarian artist 15 years her junior called Szaba Passztor, a charming artist-artisan with a wispy black beard, both of whose names mean shepherd. Moggach sold her house in Camden and moved into an old servant's cottage next to Hampstead Heath. With Hungarian friends, Passztor has refurbished it into a richly detailed warren of small dark-walled rooms stuffed with wood and marble and gorgous detritus rescued from skips.

Moggach's fiction and the facts of her life are close relations. She was brought up in Stanmore, went to Bristol University, married, went to Pakistan with her husband, then settled in Camden and had two children. Her first book was about a girl who grew up in Stanmore and went to Bristol University, her second was about a young mother with two young children in Camden, her third about Pakistan etc etc. After her divorce, the family trees in her plots began to look more baroque, and the novels tackled subjects in which she has no direct experience - child-snatching, child abuse and, in *Close Relations*, lesbianism. "I've never been a lesbian," she says, "but I've got people lined up if I'm ever going to be one."

Recently she returned for the first time to the cinema where Calman died. "I had to give a talk at the London Short Film Festival. At the end of it the chairwoman said, 'If you could write any film what would it be?' And I said in front of this audience of two or three, 'You'd walk into a Dutch 17th-century painting and a woman's reading a letter and we'll go in and see who the letter is from and what's happening to her.' The next day there was a phone call from a production company saying, 'We were in the audience. What a wonderful idea for a film!'

Needless to say, she started writing it as a novel first, from a 1660 domestic interior by Job Berkyheide that is hanging in her sitting-room. She finished it this week. When she comes to write the screenplay, she'll be able to recycle the plot from the skip of her own imagination.

'Close Relations' begins tomorrow at 9.20pm on BBC1.

An indelicate subject gets the gentle touch

Birmingham Repertory Theatre's production of new play 'Frozen' explores the evils we shy away from in an extremely watchable way. By David Benedict

NANCY despairs of Ingrid, her wayward daughter. "It's like negotiating with Artie the Hun," she quips. Which just about sums up Bryony Lavery's remarkable new play *Frozen*, which turns out to be a series of increasingly indelicate negotiations handled with astonishing dramatic delicacy.

As Lavery explains in an illuminating interview in the programme, it began as an investigation into the banality of evil but swiftly became an examination of the power of good. If that sounds like the thesis of a giant Iris Murdoch novel, *Frozen* is actually a tightly knit, 20-year journey across an emotional minefield.

One lovely sunny evening, a 10-year-old Rhona goes missing. Her mother, Nancy, retreats into a state of frozen hope. Meanwhile, Agnetha (Josie Lawrence) is in Birmingham researching into the difference between crimes committed through evil and illness: "A sin or a symptom?"

Then there's Ralph (Tom Georgeson) a loner with "a bit of previous". All three gradually link up, but as Ruari Murchison's astutely eloquent design and Tim Mitchell's superb lighting indicate, each of them is isolated by different forms of grief.

Lavery mirrors this by using monologues. Sometimes these

are a little over-explanatory (Agnetha's lecture, for example) which slows the momentum, but elsewhere the device has real dramatic purpose. The characters are compelled to confess, to tell their stories not only to us but to themselves.

This is particularly true of Nancy. Anita Dobson gives a superbly measured performance, summed up by the moment where she finally faces the truth. She takes all the time in the world and the audience responds with an equivalent rapt intensity.

By obscene coincidence, this subject matter is alarmingly topical and Lavery refuses to shy away from her story's terrifying

implications. She knows that it's the dramatist's responsibility to explore the evils we shy away from, but her unflagging imagination deflects the horror for the audience and renders the unbearable supremely watchable.

The most shocking aspect of the writing is its engrossing restraint. At the heart of the play is an act of unspeakable violence but we are never forced to witness it. Graphic depictions are at best redundant when compared with the importance of our immediate and considered responses to the consequences of murder. Only when Ralph is banged up in a cell does violence finally break loose and even then it is at one remove,



Anita Dobson gives a superb performance as Nancy

residing in the immensely powerful boiling language.

Bill Alexander's spacious, detailed direction consistently avoids undignified, obvious moves. He has taken the wise decision of producing the play in the vast auditorium of the main house, to give the idea space to resonate among a big audience.

More importantly, he refuses to insult our intelligence by taking sides. As Ralph lovingly lists the names, "Sweet Susan, Little Linda, Baby Bonny...", Alexander adds rose-coloured light floats in strains of Handel's *Largo*. Ralph's list may sound like flowers, but, in fact, they are videos. Very nasty videos which he packs into the suitcase which he clutches to his heart. Together with Georgeson's unstintingly honest performance, the scene is completely sincere and profoundly unnerving.

It's all too easy to ambush an audience's taste buds by subject matter alone. Reviewing the schlocky Seventies TV mini-series *Holocaust*, Dennis Potter destroyed the defence that it was "moving" with the remark that "if you can't make the mur-

der of six million Jews moving you shouldn't be in television".

Not for one moment does Lavery hitch a ride on the horror of her subject matter or succumb to eliciting unearned emotion. The movement of the play is consistently surprising, and even bravely comic. Potentially explosive scenes are quietly beautiful, and apparently insignificant moments suddenly quiver with passion. The almost thriller-like promise of the play's climactic confrontation is like a time-bomb ticking in the back of your head but even there, Lavery delivers the unexpected.

As Nancy tells it, Ingrid wakes from a bad dream. "I'm in the frozen Arctic and I'm exploring but I'm no good at it." Well, she may not be, but Lavery certainly is. Don't be put off by the subject (or the disgracefully unappealing publicity). *Frozen* is really about courage and compassion. It is also intelligent, imaginative and supremely uplifting. The only thing really wrong with it is that it closes on the 23 May.

'Frozen' is at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 0121 236 4455.

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Big fuss over a small bomb

THE POLITICAL shockwaves generated by India's unexpected series of nuclear tests this week have spread rather wider than the physical ones. President Bill Clinton has called the tests an "irresponsible act". The G8 leaders have expressed their concerns and imposed economic sanctions. Of course, no one can be in favour of the indiscriminate spread of nuclear weapons technology. Many sane people would even like to try to put the atomic genie back in the bottle. But there is more than a little hypocrisy about some of the criticisms now being voiced about India. How can existing nuclear powers, well represented in the G8, be so sniffy about India's actions, when all that she has done is to follow the policy of nuclear deterrence, which was responsible for 40 years of peace and security in Europe after the Second World War? In any case, these particular tests, modest by the standards of the nuclear club, may yet result in an equilibrium between the powers in the region.

It is worth understanding how the small scale of these exercises made them especially powerful in their political and strategic messages. It is harder to make a small weapon than a large one, and miniaturised warheads can be more potent, as they are easier to deliver. The engineering of such small test heads indicates a high degree of technical skill and sophistication. India can assemble about 60 of these warheads and could deliver them from aircraft or missiles. They can reach China from northern India or Pakistan from the southern part of the country. They represent an enormous boost to Indian security.

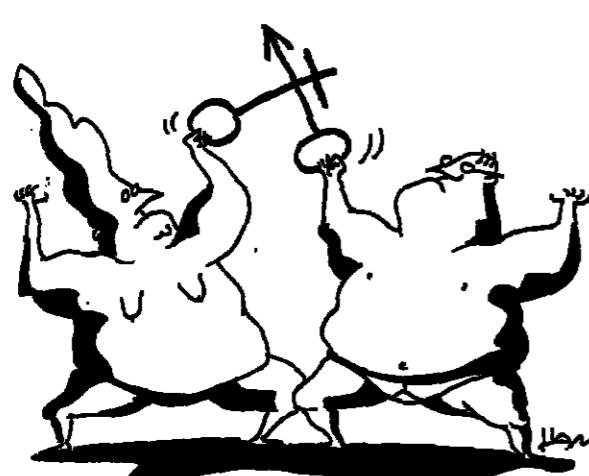
Let us be clear, though, that another reason for the tests is the fillip that they give to the ruling BJP, which gained a narrow majority in February's elections. The BJP is committed to Indian nationalism and self-sufficiency, and nuclear weapons are both symbol and substance of India's status as a regional superpower. "Don't push India around" is a message as unpalatable to India's neighbours as it is popular with her voters.

Menacing though the exercise of her destructive potential may have been, however, India has not invaded a neighbouring country or inflicted human rights abuses on her own people. She retains the distinction of being the largest democracy on earth. Neither has she breached international law. She has not yet signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The tests could be the prelude to her signing the CTBT – as it was for China. And Pakistan has said that if India signs the treaty, it will too. This crisis may be defused remarkably quickly.

New rules in the battle of the sexes

THE SEX WAR has broken out again, and in our very own pages too. But this is a new version. New man, David Aaronovitch, versus new woman, Suzanne Moore. Suzanne had a go at Paul Johnson, after his adulterous behaviour was revealed this week, and at the predictable hypocrisy of male public figures. She thinks men have a "limited" sexual repertoire. David took offence, and asked what would have happened if he had written similar sweeping generalisations about women. She pleaded guilty to generalising, but said women suffer it all the time. "It is called common sense, or having a laugh, or, in better circles, irony."

Something interesting is certainly happening down there in the trenches. The lines on the domestic battlefield have been redrawn repeatedly over the past 20 years. The presumption is now that men share responsibility for child-rearing, even if women still take the lead. Men are almost always present at the birth of their children, where they used to wait down the



pub. They do not do much housework, even where women are in full-time paid employment, but you do see them pushing pushchairs and doing the shopping. In this respect, the Prime Minister is Everyman. "I wouldn't say he is intimate with the washing machine, but he knows where it is," says Cherie Blair. He sometimes irons his own shirts and spends a lot of time with Euan, Nicky and Kathryn.

Social change is slow and uneven, and most of it is driven by economics. In some respects, women have achieved equality; in too many others, they have not. Yesterday we reported that men are becoming more prone to depression and women less. Women still suffer more, but the gap is closing fast. Equality of opportunity means equality of misery too. It is significant that the new fragmented, flexible labour market means that economics is at last working in women's favour. All jobs, men's and women's, are now insecure and, at the bottom end of the labour market in particular, women have been able to adapt better to the collapse of unskilled full-time jobs, leaving a rump of poorly-educated young men without a role.

Women are right to insist that, as a sex, they still suffer more discrimination than men. But men are justified in pointing out that they are no longer the main beneficiaries of economic change.

Secret of Sinatra

AFTER John Humphrys announced the death of Frank Sinatra on BBC radio's *Today* programme (can you remember what you were doing when you heard the news?) his co-presenter, Anna Ford, remarked that she thought we would all be hearing an awful lot of *My Way* from now on. Ms Ford was right.

But Frank Sinatra deserves to be remembered for much more than this one song, even if it was his greatest hit. His long and colourful life (his recording career spanned seven decades) will provide a rich source for columnists and biographers. But, one suspects, that they will never be able definitively to answer why, as Cole Porter put it, and Sinatra sang so neatly:

You do something to me,
Something that simply mystifies me.
Tell me, why should it be,
You have the power to hypnotise me?

Third World debt

Sir: When the leaders of the G8 countries meet in Birmingham this weekend, they will be discussing the problem of Third World debt. This is not before time, as a burden of essentially unpayable foreign debt has beset many of the world's poorest countries for the last two decades.

Debt repayments are draining these countries of vital financial resources, hindering economic growth and poverty-reduction and preventing them from tackling enormous health problems. The United Nations Development Programme has estimated that the lives of 21 million children could be saved in Africa by the year 2000 if money currently spent on debt repayments was diverted to investments in human development. In Ethiopia, where over 100,000 children die each year from preventable diseases, debt repayments are four times higher than public spending on healthcare, and in Tanzania, where 40 per cent of the population die before the age of 35, debt repayments are six times greater than spending on health.

As part of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition, we call on the G8 countries to cancel the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries, as a gesture which would mark the millennium in the most significant way possible.

Professor DAVID BAUM

President, Royal College of

Pediatrics and Child Health

Dr MICHAEL BRINDLE

President, Royal College of

Radiologists

Dr JUNE CROWN

President, Medact; President,

Faculty of Public Health Medicine

Dr KIT HARLING

President, Faculty of Occupational

Medicine

Dr R E KENDELL

President, Royal College of

Psychiatrists

Dr SANDY MACARA

Chairman of Council, British

Medical Association

Professor COLIN MacKAY

President, Royal College of

Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

Professor RODERICK MacWEEN

President, Royal College of

Pathologists

Sir NAREN PATEL

President, Royal College of

Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Professor J C PETRIE

President, Royal College of

Physicians of Edinburgh

Professor LESLEY REES

Head, International Department,

Royal College of Physicians

London WC1

Sanctity' of life

Sir: Paul Valley may find Peter Singer's rejection of the sanctity of life disturbing, but it is Professor Singer's views that stand up to closer scrutiny ("The man who would kill disabled babies", 14 May).

Belief that life is in itself sacred would demand an equal respect for all life, be it vegetable, insect or animal. Given that most of us would find that view intolerable, the next logical step is to claim that there is something about human, or advanced animal, life which gives it its sanctity. This cannot be the mere fact of it being human. It is rather that human life has certain features, such as sentience and capacity for pleasure and pain which make it valuable. But then, if a human life lacks these features, it lacks what gives it its value.

The notion that human life is of itself sacred is no more than an honourable but ill-founded fiction.

Dr JULIAN BAGGINI
Editor, *The Philosopher's Magazine*
London N4

Sir: Paul Valley was wrong to say that ending the life quickly of a severely disabled suffering baby, who has no chance of survival, takes for granted that there is no difference between killing someone and allowing them to die – it is precisely that difference that Peter Singer is highlighting. It's just that he doesn't feel that we do well by the child if we allow "not killing someone" – a moral value – to have absolute trumping power over another morally valuable outcome, namely relieving great suffering.

Moral values should not be used as an excuse to avoid facing up to a difficult decision. Singer presents us with a real-life *homoerum conflict*, and it is not resolved by saying that it is "absolutely right" not to kill – we are still left with a child in horrible pain. Human life is sacred – that is why this case presents a dilemma – but does that mean it is always good to preserve it at all cost to the baby whose life it actually is?

EMMA THORPE
Thames Ditton, Surrey

Sir: Professor Singer's concern is how to end severely disabled lives in a kindly rather than cruel fashion.

If I, as a veterinary surgeon, were to end the life of a suffering animal by starving it or allowing it to die from an untreated respiratory infection, I would expect to be struck off the Veterinary Register for cruelty. Yet these are the methods advocated for children by the ethics adviser of the British Medical Association.

Why, I wonder, should we be kinder to dogs than to children?
LEONARD BLACK FRCVS
Worthing, Sussex

22/COMMENT



Sculpture on the exterior of Exeter Cathedral. Who should pay for its upkeep? See letter below right

Photograph: Marc Hill/Apex

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

India's nuclear tests

Sir: The nuclear tests by India may not be welcomed by nuclear weapons states, but they do answer India's security concerns. India does not need nuclear weapons to counter Pakistan. The real threat is from China. It is unlikely the US or the UK will come to India's aid in case of a war with China.

Instead of condemning India, it would be prudent to enter into a constructive dialogue so that the Indian authorities can prevent fissile material from falling into rogue hands, maintain the nuclear reactors properly (to prevent a fallout) and safely dispose of nuclear wastes.

B GHOSH

Grimbury

Powers of the PCC

Sir: You criticise the Press Complaints Commission for not ruling against a newspaper on a matter of taste which you say is "apparently" outside the PCC's remit (leading article, 18 May).

It is indeed outside the PCC's remit – for good reason. When the PCC was established, the newspaper industry itself – not my Commission – decided that we should not have powers to adjudicate on matters of taste.

The thinking behind it – with which I am bound to say I am in agreement – is that the boundary between deciding on matters of taste and exercising censorship is too narrow. What is poor taste to me is good taste to someone else: let the market – which, as all newspapers know, is highly competitive – sort that out. If newspapers now have a different view, then they should change the powers of the PCC – not criticise it for something beyond its control.

You say that the Commission is

an "adjudicator on trial". That is correct: self-regulation – which seeks to balance freedom and responsibility – will always be "on trial". For myself, I think I would win few admirers by acting *ultra vires* and starting to exercise powers of censorship that newspapers themselves never intended me to have.

Lord WAKEHAM

Chairman

Press Complaints Commission

London EC4

Labour and the unions

Sir: Anne McElvoy says (Comment, 12 May) that trade unions and John Monks would have more influence if they severed their links with Labour.

Let's make it clear. John Monks and the TUC have no institutional links with the Labour Party. Neither do the majority of the unions in the TUC. Even Unison is only affiliated for part of its membership. How does this give them more influence than those who are?

My own union is affiliated to the Labour Party, but we lobby all political parties on relevant issues. We have a Parliamentary Committee of 80 MPs, 11 MEPs and 8 members of the House of Lords. We regularly brief them and are advised by them. MPs welcome our first-hand knowledge of the world of work.

The same goes for our day-to-day work in developing party policies as an affiliated union on issues where our members have expertise, such as competitiveness, healthcare, lifelong learning, and fairness at work. With the MSC nominee Margaret Wall as deputy to Tony Blair on the joint Policy Committee of the Labour Party, and our representatives on the National Policy Forum and its key sub-committees, our direct affiliation enables the concerns of those in the world of work, their

families and communities to complement the views of the "great and the good".

Affiliation provides for ordinary people to have a say at all levels just as it was always intended to.

ROGER LYONS

General Secretary

MSF

London EC1

Eurovision entries

Sir: Heather Henderson asks (letter, 13 May) why Israel takes part in the Eurovision Song Contest. Some time during the 1960s, the Israeli radio or television network applied for membership of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and was accepted. Since then they have won the Eurovision Song Contest three times.

If the Palestinians eventually get a broadcasting network of their own which can be affiliated to the EBU, there is no reason why they should not have an entry to the song contest. If any other Mediterranean country wanted to enter it would be welcome.

I V LEVIN

Bradford, West Yorkshire

Pedestrians in peril

Sir: "Britain's roads are the safest in Europe" proclaims S Ferguson (letter, 9 May). In fact, the UK has the highest number of pedestrian road deaths in Europe.

1750 pedestrians were killed on UK roads in 1990 (HMSO figures), significantly more than in France (1520) or the former West Germany (1450). In terms of pedestrians killed per 100,000 of the population, the UK still ranks fifth out of 16 countries: hardly indicative of high standards of road safety.

JOHN CRAM

York

Cost of cathedrals

Sir: I have recently – not for the first time – been involved in a campaign to raise funds for the maintenance of one of this country's priceless heritage of glorious cathedrals – Peterborough. This has brought home to me the frailty of the system on which the preservation of the most important collection of buildings in this country is founded.

Were our cathedrals ruined they would be scrupulously maintained by the state. As it is, each cathedral is the sole charge of its dean and chapter, meagrely funded in relation to the scale of their responsibilities.

Much greater resources should be made readily available to them to ensure the upkeep of these irreplaceable national treasures. It should not be necessary for deans and chapters to expend their energies on fund-raising campaigns, nor for cathedrals to charge for admission, or to commercialise themselves as "tourist attractions". It should not be necessary for us to go cap in hand to the National Lottery to help to raise a small part of our needs, when other examples of heritage or the arts receive tens of millions of pounds at the drop of a hat.

I recommend the establishment of a National Cathedrals Trust, adequately funded by state and lottery, on which cathedrals can draw for their survival. A small part of the effort we have put into raising our £7.3m could have put together an unshakeable claim for at least that amount, had there been a fund to which we could have applied.

DAVID POWELL
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Left-wing dementia

Sir: I don't want to be pompous about this, but I thought Suzanne Moore's description of me as "barking" and in the grip of a "right-wing dementia" (Comment, 13 May) was itself pretty demented, disproportionate being one of the measures of a want of judgement.

As I discovered that life's experiences didn't quite match up to the theory and blueprint as mapped by early socialist-anarcho-feminism? So what! Are you allowed to learn by your

Humanity's mistake: we ate our rivals and are paying for it still



DAVID AARONOVITCH

ONCE upon a time (maybe some 550 million years ago), on this restless earth of ours, existed not one, but two, entirely different forms of life. I am not talking different like cats and dogs are different; I am talking different like everything you see around you all the time, and nothing that you can possibly imagine, are different. One of these forms of life developed into – among other things – man. And we ate the other one.

This, at least, is the theory of a geology professor from Massachusetts, Mark McMenamin, who has just presented a paper on the subject to a meeting of the Geological Society of America in Salt Lake City. Professor McMenamin bases his conclusions on studies of some very peculiar fossils called Ediacarians (named after the Ediacara Hills in South Australia where they were first discovered in the 1940s).

Ediacarians, who seemed to predominate on earth before the evolutionary explosion of the early Cambrian period, were no slouches themselves when it came to development. They took a huge variety of forms, with two basic characteristics in common. First, they all seem to have been soft and bouncy; the second shared feature is that they all resembled modern day upholstered furnishings, or household appliances. Eructica, for instance, was the same shape as a coffee mug, while others took the form of quilts, mattresses and lampshades.

Not surprisingly, according to McMenamin, these animals were a pacific bunch, lolling around in warm sludge most of the day, lazily allowing nourishment (in the form of photosynthetic algae) to penetrate their bodies – if the algae felt like it. The professor describes this state as being a "Garden of Ediacara".

So what happened? Well, one of our forebears (a very precocious early Trilobite perhaps) developed the two things that made it a dangerous predator: sense organs which allowed it to locate prey, and – that other big plus in the predatory world – mouth parts, to bite its prey when it had found it.

The one development without the other would have been no threat. But put together they spelled *adieu* to the Ediacarians. One by one the quilts, mugs and mattresses were hoovered up by our great grandpas and mas. Within the space of an evolutionary life-break, they disappeared completely from sight, until rediscovered fifty years ago. Our ancestors then started in on each other.

Everything goes somewhere. One wonders what aspects of our deep psyches are affected by our terrible and exploitative treatment of our parallel life form. It is possible that much of our inner feelings of guilt and responsibility originate in the day that one trilobite turned to one millipede and said, "All gone!" Perhaps it might help us to come to terms with our guilt, were we to apologise to Ediacarians for activities in the Cambrian era.

Other questions are raised too. In recent years some historians (notably Niall Ferguson of Oxford University) have dabbled in alternative histories. You know the kind of stuff, what if King Charles I hadn't been a brainless autocrat but a regular kind of a responsive monarch, might we have avoided Cromwell, the Civil War, regicide and a descent into vulgar democracy? These questions are fascinating, and invariably show how all the great left-wing events in history were accidents, while all the right-wing ones were an inevitable consequence of the way Man really is.

Even so, such speculations are as nothing when compared to the really great historical imponderable, what if we hadn't eaten the Ediacarians? What if we'd left them alone. What if (try to get inside this one), right now, the soft-bodied descendants – the evolutionary offspring – of those early peaceful slime-suckers, ran the planet?

Pessimists would, I suppose, reply that we'd all look like Vanessa Feltz, talk like Michael Howard, and spend most of the day watching *Late Lunch*. But – an optimist – I prefer to think that we would have become like beautiful rococo sofas, intelligent curtains, sentient champagne glasses, all of us growing to enormous, height, incorporating the most complex and satisfying patterns on our dulcet exteriors, living in pleasant sludge most of the year, and going – slowly – to the mountains for our holidays. There would be no wars, no money, and only the most unexpected form of sex.

But it didn't happen. And this is the second part of my meditation: what should we learn from the sad story of the Ediacarians? What, if anything, does it tell us about the nature of things? Sense organs and mouth parts say the free marketeer or the realpolitiker; it's a trilobite eats quilt world. She that survives will be she that gets the best mandibles and the sharpest eyes and uses them. He that dies out will be he that lies in ooze and expects his food to volunteer for duty. It shows the inevitable victory of Yang. Yes indeed, says Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, and it also indicates the need for Ediacaran nations, like India, to develop their own mouth parts. There are a lot of predators out there.

No say the Yimmers (vegetarians, feminists, ecologists and *Independent* columnists). What is proved by this is that we have lost paradise at least once because of bad old predatory behaviour. And just because things have always been like this, is no reason that they always should be. Let us reflect upon the fate of the Ediacarians and resolve that it shall never, ever happen again. Blessed are the meek.

Debt relief for the Third World is not enough

It should be no surprise to hear that the case in favour of debt-forgiveness is being made so strongly at the G8 summit by a child of the Sixties who carries strong religious convictions into his politics. The Prime Minister no doubt believes that this is the sort of thing he is in politics to do.

To some it is slightly more surprising to see that the Home Secretary, Peter Mandelson, has added his name to the petition organised by campaigners for debt relief. However, this probably reflects more the fact that the Minister Without Portfolio belongs to a generation where, whatever your politics, ending Third World poverty is an article of faith in the civilised world. So it's hard to fight back the instinct to cheer when you hear the stirring speeches in favour of forgiving developing country debts. It's a celebratory gesture worthy of the millennium.

This is not just an issue about money; it is also about democracy, and the right of nations to make their own mistakes. It is not just the debt to which the developing world objects; it is the fact that it allows the developed world to tell even democratically elected governments what to do. The IMF even now imposes detailed economic and social policies as the

price of its help. No one says that governments cannot make a priority of health care, but any that do seem to find the water just a little rougher when it comes to negotiations over debt rescheduling.

However, there are difficult questions which the campaigners don't raise, and that the summit would do well to consider. For one, how do we deal with the fact that, even if you take the decision to forgive debt, that won't feed a single child by itself? Relieving debt will not by itself build new dams, modernise

country from which my own family comes, Guyana.

It is the size of England and Wales, but has a population of less than a million. GNP per head is less than £400, and infant mortality is around 60 per thousand live births – a figure not known in Europe since the Middle Ages. Its debts total over a billion pounds. And it is doing well, by the standards of

its people work hard, its government is pretty much democratic and its financial management is of the Gordon

farmers or provide viable businesses that offer regular jobs. To tackle that we may need to look closely at an uncomfortable fact:

the only agency that may have the power to dig the developing world out of its hole is the one everyone distrusts most: global capital.

The most significant players in many developing countries are not governments or aid agencies: they are the global concerns that beset the world, in effect buying the assets of nations. Take for example the

British teenagers lead the world in their sexual activity – why?



GLENDA COOPER

CONGRATULATIONS!

Britain leads the world in something! It's a long time since we've been able to say that. But "We should hang our heads in shame," said the *Sun* newspaper yesterday, reacting to the news that not only does Britain have the highest rate of unmarried teenage mums but our teenagers are the most sexual active on the globe.

The percentage of unmarried women who are sexually active by the age of 19 is 86 per cent. The US manages a measly 75 per cent in second place. The first thought that springs to mind is: can this be true? Are all the old stereotypes out of date? Remember that sneezing by famous Latin lovers? "Continental people have sex lives. The English have hot water bottles," said George Mikes. Or Byron: "What men call gallantry and gods adultery is much more common where the climate's sultry."

The English have long been seen as one of the most sexless nations in the world, yet according to the study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York – which analysed data from 53 countries – British teenagers are top of the bonking list. Cue howls of outrage. "Our world record of shame," said the *Mail*. But are we really so surprised?

British society has changed. In a survey conducted for the Birth Control Trust, researchers found that while in 1983, nearly three in ten people believed sex before marriage was always wrong; by 1991, this had fallen to less than one in five.

British teenagers are just having a good time. It's surely no accident that the two countries which have the highest rate of sexual activity – Britain and America – are also the two that have the strongest youth culture. Around the world it is British and American pop stars, film stars and designers who are forming how we look, what we wear, what we do. It's something our Prime Minister is always reminding us we should be proud of.

And what makes youth culture so vibrant? Well teen icons and pop stars are mainly motivated by sex. Just think of Elvis at the beginning of teenage culture in the Fifties.

Ironically, it was Blair's heroine Margaret Thatcher who helped encourage a go-get attitude to sex. She might have been straight-faced herself – she refused to fund an influential sexual attitudes and lifestyle study in the 1980s and even last year was said to be horrified that William Hague was sharing a suite with his fiancée at the Tory party conference.

Sex's shopping is everywhere. On television or in the cinema you can watch an advert where a woman appears to be in ecstasy dancing with a man in a nightclub – until he finds out it's her pager vibrating in her pocket. Or the jeans advert where a girl strips off and into a pair of denims in front of a "blind" man (he's only holding the white stick for someone else).

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It was no point expecting everyone to keep zipped up and behave when, in all other realms of society, she was encouraging us to act on our desires. Greed was good, in the Eighties, and you could and should go out and get what you want. When capitalism is king

praised that teenagers are having sex. We're all at it (Bill Clinton's practically made a career out of it). We know that what the old-style moralists are saying does not fit with what most adults are doing. And for all the tut-tutting teenagers aren't rushing into sex with abandon – the average age for first intercourse is still 17 and family planning clinics report that teens generally do not feel coerced or rushed



How it begins: we bring our children up in a highly sexualised environment

Photograph: Big Pictures

It's surely no accident that Britain and America are the two countries with the strongest youth cultures

into sex. They give good reasons why they want to experiment and look askance when told to wait. For marriage? Like all the adults they see around them? Yeah right.

Rather than condemning the fact that 86 per cent are indulging in sex, the real problem is that there is still such a high number of teenage mothers, due to poor sex education, ignorance and a lack of clinics where teenagers can seek contraceptive advice without fear. Earlier this year it was revealed that 1996 (the most recent figures available) had seen the highest number of schoolgirl pregnancies for ten years. Having a baby in adolescence means the chances of a good education or a good job are significantly lessened.

Health Minister Tessa Jowell said in March that she would be enlisting the help of teen magazines to educate girls on underage sex. "This is not about advocating sex, it is recognising the reality of life," she said.

The reality is that British teenagers are having a lot of sex. That may not be a bad thing in itself – social attitudes have changed – but the result is that British adolescents are also having a lot of unplanned babies. That's not good. "Be a little wiser, Baby. Put it on."

Glasgow	from	£69*
	return inc. taxes	
Dublin	from	£79
	return inc. taxes	
Copenhagen	from	£152
	return inc. taxes	
Oslo	from	£186
	return inc. taxes	
Belfast	from	£69*
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Frank Sinatra

"WE ALL grew up with Sinatra," said his film director Peter Bogdanovich. "His songs have meant so much to us that, when he sings, he's not only doing his own autobiography, he's doing ours." "The Voice", "Ol' Blue Eyes", "The Chairman of the Board", "King of the Hill" - Frank Sinatra was a phenomenon, a pint-sized colossus bestridding the worlds of film, finance and music.

The main thing, of course, was the music: no popular singer has sung so many first-rate songs, old and new. He brought to this material a unique, evocative phrasing that personalised the romantic sentiments in the lyrics. The disc jockey William B. Williams once said, "Sinatra's records were on the radio during more defilements than those of any other singer."

Sinatra developed his style by studying many performers, but it was of Mabel Mercer that he said, "She taught me everything I know." She was the music; no popular singer has sung so many first-rate songs, old and new. He brought to this material a unique, evocative phrasing that personalised the romantic sentiments in the lyrics. The disc jockey William B. Williams once said, "Sinatra's records were on the radio during more defilements than those of any other singer."

In 1939 Harry James, who had just left the Benny Goodman band to start his own outfit and had yet to find a vocalist, heard Sinatra on WNEW and dropped into the Cabin in the following night. He hired him at \$65 a week, despite the singer's adamant refusal to change his name.

Soon the trade paper *Metronome*, reviewing the new band, praised "the pleasing vocals of Frank Sinatra, whose easy phrasing is especially commendable".

He had been with James for six months and was still under contract to him when a CBS executive tipped off Tommy Dorsey about "the skinny kid who's singing with Harry's band", after which Dorsey auditioned him and offered \$125 a week. James, knowing Sinatra's wife Nancy was pregnant and that the extra dollar would come in handy, released him from his contract with a grin and a handshake.

The skinny kid's original inspiration was Bing Crosby, particularly for the way he handled a microphone. "The microphone is the singer's basic instrument," Sinatra maintained. "You have to learn to play it like it was a saxophone." Or a trombone: it is part of musical mythology that "The Voice" learnt his breath control by studying Dorsey's trombone technique night after night. In 1941, the readers of *Billboard* voted him the year's "Outstanding Male Vocalist". In 1942 *Metronome* accorded him the same honour.

He sang with Dorsey for nearly three years, made 83 recordings (including the very popular "This Love of Mine" and "I'll Never Smile Again"), and gained useful camera experience when the band appeared in the films *Las Vegas Nights* (1941) and *Ship Ahoy* (1942). In 1942, when Sinatra left to go out on his own, Dorsey, the wonkiness, vindictive, hard-drinking brawler who was incongruously billed as "The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing", demanded 43½ per cent of the income's earnings for the next 10 years.

The date 30 December 1942 marked the end of the Band Era and the start of the Age of the Crooner. On that day Sinatra appeared as an "Extra Added Attraction" at the New York movie house the Paramount, on a bill headed by Benny Goodman and his band. The teenaged bobby-soxers in the audience gave Sinatra a screaming, swooning, headline-making reception, and he was suddenly the hottest talent in show business. During one engagement, when he missed a few performances because of a sore throat, hundreds of teenage girls marched furiously around the theatre, mourning their idol's non-appearance by wearing black bobbysocks.

In 1942 Sinatra had been chatting with a friend and fellow singer named Barry Wood. "You're really going places, Frank," Wood said. "What are your future plans?" Sinatra replied, "I want to be the star of the *Hit Parade* radio show." Wood was lost for words as he was then the star of *The Hit Parade*. Sinatra took over the following year. He also signed a contract with RKO, who cast him as a swooner-crooner named Frank Sinatra in a loose adaptation of the Broadway musical *Higher and Higher* (1943).

RKO used Rodgers and Hart's "Disgustingly Rich", but jettisoned the rest of their songs, including "It Never Entered My Mind", which Sinatra would record, memorably, 12 years later. The film's new score, by Harold Adamson and Jimmy McHugh, provided the singer with two recording hits, "A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening" and "I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night".

RKO's next assignment, *Step Lively* (1944) was even thinner than Frankie Boy himself: a feeble rehash of the old Marx Brothers flop *Room Service* (1938), but it had a lively score by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne.

His parents were both Italian immigrants. His father, a fireman who also boxed briefly under the name Marty O'Brien, was shocked by his son's early decision to sing for a living. Francis' mother, Natalie Della (Dolly), a mid-wife, abortionist, tavern owner and political activist, was more sanguine when, at the age of 16 and full of high pie-in-the-sky hopes he dropped out of high school, in Hoboken, New Jersey, unable to wait until graduation to become a singing star. He performed at dances, weddings, and other New Jersey

functions until 1933, when he and three fellow Hobokenites auditioned for the radio series *Major Bowes' Amateur Hour*. Bowes liked them, dubbed them the Hoboken Four, and put them on his show. They won first prize and a spot in one of the Major's vaudeville tours.

Sinatra gained invaluable experience during his two years at the Rustic Cabin, a New Jersey roadside where he worked as singing head waiter and master of ceremonies, putting up with the low pay because the place featured regular radio broadcasts. He also sang, free of charge, on the New York independent radio station WNEW.

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You can hear her influence in Sinatra's 1957 recording of David Raksin and Johnny Mercer's "Laura". Most vocalists singing "The laugh that floats on a summer night / That you can never quite recall" would sensibly take a breath after "recall", thereby starting the new thought "And you'll see Laura on the train that is passing through" with the new breath. But Sinatra manages to maintain the sense despite taking his breath after "never quite". Then, in smooth, flowing phrase, he holds "Recall" (which he sings full-out), continuing into a tender "And you'll see . . ."

Here he takes his next breath to sing the word "Laura", which Raksin composed to be sung on two repeated notes. Sinatra, however, abandons the second note and swoops to a lower one (staying, of course, within the harmony), thus giving the effect of caressing the name, as well as providing a strand of melodic invention which the conductor/arranger Gordon Jenkins can't resist echoing in the strings. The song ends with one of Johnny Mercer's surprise twists: "That was Laura, but she's only a dream." To emphasise this twist, Sinatra sings full-out on the word "but" (placed on the highest note in the song), and then brings an aching sadness to the last line, he and the orchestra pausing dramatically between "She's only" and "a dream".

On an earlier recording of Cole Porter's "Night and Day", Sinatra made an identical downward swoop on the word "Tornem" (also composed to be sung on two repeated notes), probably motivated by the same sense of emotion. Such improvisation, plus even more annoying liberties with many of his rhymes - "I said to myself, 'This affair never will go so well', / But why should I try to resist when baby, I know drama [should be "so"] well" - eventually prompted a telegram from Porter, asking, "Why do you sing my songs if you don't like the way they were written?"

Throughout his career Sinatra attracted controversy, over his private life, his political views and, most obviously, his friendship with Mafia figures. For over 40 years stories circulated about his links to the Mafia. Recently, while sitting between two women in a Los Angeles restaurant, he leaned back too far in his chair and found himself falling. He caught hold of the two women, who tried to save themselves by catching hold of the tablecloth, after which all three fell to the floor, followed by the contents of their table. So closely was Sinatra identified with organised crime that everyone who saw him lying there immediately assumed he had finally been the victim of a Mob killing and ran from the restaurant in terror.

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Budd: James Harvey Lewis Budd, born 11 May 1998 at Greenwich, a son for Mark and Jennifer (née Vickery).

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2802 or fax to 0171-293 2802.

Today: Canon Reginald Askew, former dean of King's College, London, 70; Mr Stuart Bell MP, 60; Dr Peter Brand MP, 51; Mrs Pierce Brosnan, actor, 47; Sir Colin Cole, former Garter Principal King of Arms, 76; Mr Don Connonan, former government minister, 88; Mr Mark Elford, ambassador to Norway, 59; Sir Nicholas Goodison, deputy chairman of the old Marx Brothers flop *Room Service* (1938), but it had a lively score by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne, 74; Mr Jimmy Hood MP, 49; Mr Roy Hudd, comedian, 62; Sir Dawyd Kairaba Jawara, former president of The Gambia, 74; Mr Gerald Jones, con-



Sinatra in *Young at Heart* (1954)

Photograph: The Kobal Collection

When MGM bought up his RKO contract, Sinatra insisted that Cahn and Styne write the score for his first, hard-drinking brawler who was incongruously billed as "The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing", demanded 43½ per cent of the income's earnings for the next 10 years.

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ductor and organist, 81; Maj-Gen Sir

Desmond Langley, former Governor of Bermuda, 68; Professor Peter

Levi, poet and archaeologist, 67; Sir

David Maclean MP, 45; Mr John

McWilliam MP, 57; Professor Ken-

neth Morgan, former principal, Uni-

versity College of Wales, Aberystwyth,

64; Sir David Penny-Davey, High

Court judge, 56; Professor Gareth

Roberts, Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield

University, 58; Miss Gabriela Sabi-

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Walford, solicitor, 71; Lieut.-Gen Sir

Antony Walker, former Comman-

dent Royal College of Defence

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89; Sir Russell Wood, former deputy

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Beetham, chairman of the Trustees,

RAF Museum, 75; Mr Keith Bradley

MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary,

Social Security, 48; Sir Rodric Bruff-

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66; Professor Donald Cameron Watt,

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Mr Geoffrey Cawton, former Vice-

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Pacific, 72; Sir Charles Cawley, for-

mer chief scientist, Ministry of Pow-

er, 91; Professor John Crags,

electrical engineer, 82; Mr Terence

Evans, actor, 72; Sir John Gorick,

former senior civil servant, 77; Lord

Gordon of Strathblane, chairman,

Scottish Radio Holdings, 62; The

Right Rev Ian Griggs, former Bishop

of Ludlow, 70; Sir Ronald Hal-

stead, former deputy chairman,

British Steel, 71; Dr Raymond Hide,

geophysicist, 69; Mr Simon Hughes

MP, 47; Mr John Illes, actor, 44; Mr

Alan Johnson MP, 48; Mr Sugar Ray

Leonard, boxing champion, 42; Mr

Peter Menius, composer, 75; Sir

Eric Menzies, former president,

Westland Aircraft, 92; Miss Birgit

Nilsson, operatic soprano, 76; Lieut-

-Gen Sir Douglas Packard, 95; Sir Ed-

OFT warning adds to pressure on banks

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

BANKS, particularly the former building societies, suffered sharp punishment as the Office of Fair Trading warned about their treatment of customers.

They were under pressure even before John Bridgeman, the OFT director general, said he intended to investigate complaints against Northern Rock, off 51p at 555p. Negative comments from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson created the early unease. The investment house warned the mortgage war was intensifying and suggested Halifax and Woolwich could lose out.

With niggling worries that the Far Eastern crisis could hold some unpleasant surprises for some of the banking community, the sector could muster few friends on a day the stock market fretted about the possibility of higher interest rates as well as the tiger economies.

Abbey National fell 34p to 1,047p; Alliance & Leicester

20p to 800p; Halifax 11.5p to 776.5p and Woolwich 6.25p to 339.75p. Schroders dropped 58p to 1,915p; Lloyds TSB 32.5p to 861p; Bank of Scotland 28p to 690p and Barclays 24p to 1,172p.

Ladbrokes was again the blue chip front-runner. Shares of the betting and hotel group romped ahead 15.5p to 575p, a two day gain of 33p. Closer links with Hilton Hotel Corporation of the US seem to be the spur. HHC promised to buy 5 per cent of Ladbrokes, to underline a trading relationship, and two shares on Thursday awakened hopes the stake build-up had started.

There are also hopes of extensive corporate action, perhaps even a bid for the company.

Footsie spent most of the session in retreat, ending 30.7 points down at 5,917.8. At one time it was off 82. Supporting shares again outperformed their peers. The mid cap index achieved yet another peak

while the small cap ended unchanged.

The thought of mega-bids in the telephony industry gave Cable and Wireless a 20.5p boost to 695p and Orange 8.75p to 448.75p, BT, with year's figures next week and talking about US adventures again, fall 4.5p to 645p.

Cable Telecom surged another 145p to 2,085p as Lehman Brothers made positive noises.

Next, where finance director David Keens has warned about continuing difficulties, fell a further 15.5p to 484p. The shares were 835p before doubts set in about trading.

Allied Carpets continued to say retail confidence, producing a profits warning which sent the shares sliding 47p to 89p. Two years ago the shares were floated at 215p. Its comments left Carpetright looking threadbare with a 23p fall to 337. DFS Furniture also fell 10.5p to 256p.

A profit warning from

Stoves, the cooker maker, cut the shares 49p to 158.5p; Crest Packaging dropped 8p to 49.5p after warning about profits.

Rolls-Royce lost 2.25p to 290.75p after confirming a \$400m Singapore Airlines order. Billiton, the mining group ended 12.5p lower at 166.75p; there was a late trade involving 100 million shares at 158p.

An upbeat trading state-

ment and support from Credit Lyonnais and Salomon Smith Barney pushed healthcare group Nycomed America 60p higher to 2,130p.

Shipbroker Haras Clark-son rose 13p to 130.5p. It rejected a 130p offer from Charles Taylor Group and Howe Robinson Investments.

Prism Leisure was another to collect an approach. It did not lead to an offer. The shares slipped 2p to 68.5p.

But the new bid approach to Trust Motor drove the shares 17p higher to 198p and engineer Headway gained 14p to 57.5p after admitting talks were on.

Reece, a distributor of cycles and industrial fasteners, firmed to 2.5p. Britannia, the construction group, is thought to have topped up its recently acquired 14.9 per cent shareholding. Last year, after stake-building, it took over British Building and Engineering.

Jermyn Investment Prop-

erties moved ahead 2.25p to 337.5p after buying ELP Properties from Marylebone Warwick Balfour, unchanged at 13.5p. To fund the deal Jermyn is raising £40m through a placing and open offer of convertible, unsecured loan stock.

JJB Sports jogged 24p higher to 547.5p. Charterhouse Tilney likes the shares, drawing attention to the World Cup and expected kit relaunches by Premiership clubs. Current year's profits are forecast at £43.2m with £51.1m in the following year.

Computer shares lost a little of their strength. But Admiral rose 100p to 1,207.5p and Eidos 40p to 1,100p.

Tracker Network, the car security group, had a splendid run, up 137.5p to a 882.5p peak. It is due to move from AIM to full listing on Monday.

James Fisher, the shipping group, held at 127p. Stockbroker Wise Spectre suggests profits will rise £1m to £9.5m this year and £10.4m next.

TAKING STOCK

SHARES of Mennimore Abbey down to 39p last summer, firmed to 78p. Stockbroker Panmure Gordon forecasts a sharp profits advance by the storage group. Analyst Simon Strong expects profits in the year just ended to reach £4.8m against £1.8m a year earlier. For this year he expects £6.6m.

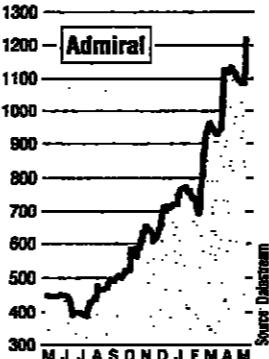
A NEW stock market is due to be launched on Guernsey in September. Behind the Channel Islands Stock Exchange is Guernsey's Financial Services Commission. Membership and listing rules are being drafted and a chief executive sought. The market will offer facilities for trading in the shares of Channel Islands companies as well as those based elsewhere.

FAYREWOOD held at 74.5p.

Its share have climbed on bid hopes. The company is in talks to buy a computer services business which, it says, would not constitute a reverse takeover. The deal will be satisfied by cash.

Share Spotlight

share price, pence



Source: Bloomberg

M J J A S O N D J F N M A M

Jermyn Investment Prop-

Share Price Data

Prices are sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by the latest earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional.

Other details: Ex rights x Ex dividend; s Suspended; p Partly Paid; n Nil Dividend; A/American Depository Receipt.

Gilt Prices are Bloomberg Generic.

Source: Bloomberg

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Stock volume: 90.5m trades 60.288

Gilt's index n/a

Market Leaders Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	
BT	65.6m	Transgas Devol	0.9m	Body Shop Int	8.95m	Dura Petroleum	8.02m	
Timex	22.6m	Lloyd TSB Group	8.97m	Relco Group	4.7m			
Thomson Travel	22.0m	Admiral	8.44m	PZC	6.0m			
Bt Peripherals	0.73m	Carroll	8.3m	Bt Steel	5.83m			
Group 5	1.5m	Transac	8.38m	Corus	5.05m			
FTSE 100 Index hour by hour								
Open	5946.5	11:30	5902.0	Down 46.5	15:00	5894.2	Down 74.3	
9:00	5946.0	Down 2.5	12:00	5894.0	Down 54.5	14:00	5894.4	Down 5.71
9:00	5947.0	Down 3.1	12:00	5890.9	Down 57.1	14:00	5897.8	Down 30.7

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Bt Peripherals							

Regulators crack down on savings and undertakers ...

Bank shares tumble on Rock inquiry

By Clifford German

SHARES in the banking sector fell heavily yesterday after the Office of Fair Trading threatened the banks with court action if they failed to treat customers fairly.

The OFT issued a strongly worded warning to banks such as Northern Rock which have cut interest rates on accounts without giving savers the opportunity to transfer their money to more profitable accounts without penalty.

The OFT is investigating complaints by savers that Northern Rock restructured accounts without warning last month, reducing interest rates, and denied them the freedom to move elsewhere without notice.

But the investigation could be extended to other banks and building societies, the OFT said yesterday. That view was echoed by Leo Finn, Northern Rock's chief executive, who said the issues raised by the OFT were industry-wide.

Northern Rock shares fell 51p to 555p after the warning, wiping more than £30m off the market value, but other banks were also affected, with Lloyds TSB down 32.5p at 861p, Abbey National off 34p at 1047p and Bank of Scotland down 22p to 718p.

The investigation follows complaints about the Northern Rock, after the former building society last month merged 11 accounts into three, reducing interest rates by as much as 3 per cent. Most customers were only informed of the changes on the same day that they took effect.

Notice periods for withdrawing money were also reduced, but they were not abolished, leaving investors with a choice between paying penalties to move their cash immediately or being locked into unattractive interest rates until their notice period expired.

The OFT attacked the practice in an exceptionally toughly worded statement. "Customers do not expect banks to change arbitrarily the nature of a product, lock them

into less favourable terms and conditions, fail to give adequate warning of any changes, and treat some account holders differently from others," John Bridgeman, director general, said.

If the case is proved, banks which fail to amend their rules would be taken to court, but the OFT believes that banks should take immediate steps to change their rules and compensate investors who feel they have already suffered financial losses.

"Unfair contract terms have no place in modern banking and should be removed without delay. They are in any case unenforceable in law," the OFT said. Mr Bridgeman opened the way to savers to seek redress if they felt they had suffered loss. "Customers do not need a ruling on fairness from the OFT to challenge such terms or seek redress if they feel they have suffered loss," the statement said.

Northern Rock believes it has been unfairly pilloried because it abandoned the traditional practice of publishing its plans to cut interest rates and restructure accounts in the media and unilaterally took the decision to notify customers directly of the changes it planned to make in the interests of customer relations. In doing so it attracted high-profile criticism which other banks have avoided.

The outcome of the investigation is likely to have a major effect on the rules governing deposit accounts in general and notice accounts in particular. Banks and building societies may be obliged to give account-holders the same notice of a proposed cut in interest rates as they require from savers for penalty-free withdrawals. If so institutions may further reduce the length of notice needed to withdraw cash from notice accounts, or replace them with fixed rate accounts which tie investors in for a fixed period.

The rules could be changed to require investors to be informed personally of rates changes, although that would be cumbersome and costly, Northern Rock said.



The inquiry into the funeral industry will focus on the links between directors and crematoria

OFT investigates funerals

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched into Britain's funeral industry following concerns over over-charging and heavy-handed selling techniques. The investigation by the Office of Fair Trading comes after a television documentary last week claimed to have uncovered unethical business practices, including staff mis-treating dead bodies and using occupied coffins as waste paper baskets.

John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, said he had become "increasingly disturbed" by allegations about the £840m industry, including those made in the Channel 4 *Undercover Britain* programme.

"The bereaved are at their most vulnerable as consumers and need protection from the effects of unfair competition and from aggressive sales techniques," he said.

The OFT said claims had been made

about high prices and the alleged practice by some funeral directors of pushing consumers away from cheaper funerals towards the middle-price range where mark-ups are higher.

The inquiry will look at the structure of the funeral market, the links between funeral directors and crematoria and whether the largest companies use their market power to the detriment of consumers' interests.

The average cost of a funeral is around £1,200, having risen dramatically over the last few years.

The television programme showed one funeral worker using the arm of a dead woman as a "beer pump". Another threw litter into an occupied coffin. SCI, the company featured in the programme said it had already dismissed the two individuals concerned.

The company said it was "shocked and saddened" by the documentary. "We will not tolerate any malpractice in our business," a spokesman said.

SCI is the world's largest funeral business. Based in America it moved into the UK market four years ago and now conducts 85,000 funerals a year out of a total of 600,000.

The company added that it was in favour of more effective regulation and had submitted a document to the DTI last year suggesting a single regulator. SCI resigned from the National Association of Funeral Directors last week and is joining the funeral Ombudsman scheme instead.

CWS Funeral Services, the funeral business operated by the Co-Op, said it hoped the OFT inquiry would bring national regulation. Sandy MacDonald, general manager of the group which carries out one in four of all funerals in the UK, said: "We have long been seeking regulation of the funeral sector."

Banks were closed at the behest of the Indonesian central bank, which also suspended foreign exchange dealing.

On the international markets, the Indonesian rupiah rose, as brokers said the cost of "shorting the currency" was rising. Meanwhile, on Jakarta stock exchange, only a handful of shares changed hands.

Stock markets the world over were jittery as fears resurfaced of knock-on effects on Western corporate earnings.

London's blue-chip FTSE 100 share index closed down 30.7 at 5917.8, off its earlier low of 5865.6, and the US Dow Jones index was marginally lower at midday.

Market reaction in the Far East was relatively subdued with the Japanese Nikkei down 64.83 points at 15,242.86 and the Hang Seng down 53.6 at 9538.4. However, City traders are braced for further losses in the region. "Traders are worried they will be coming in on Monday to significant falls across Asia," commented one dealer.

The Indonesian crisis has reawakened market concerns about the stability of the Japanese banks. According to the Bank of International Settlements, Japanese banks are the biggest lenders to Indonesia. At the end of June last year, the banks had a combined exposure of \$23.14bn (£13.7bn).

The international financial community also expressed concern about the delay to settlements caused by the unexpected closure of the Indonesian financial markets. "We're hoping the settlements will be made on Monday, but there's no way of being sure," said one source.

UK companies were generally taking a more conservative approach to the crisis than their US counterparts. Standard Chartered, the banking group, said its offices were closed, but there were no immediate plans to evacuate. HSBC took a similar stance, and British Aerospace said, although its offices were closed, there were no immediate plans to move staff out.

...but rail and water firms get easy ride from watchdogs

Anger as train lease firms escape tougher controls

By Michael Harrison

RAIL pressure groups reacted angrily yesterday after John Swift, the rail regulator, told ministers not to bring the privatised leasing companies under direct regulatory control.

The rolling stock companies welcomed the announcement, predicting it would bring greater certainty to the industry. But the pressure group Save Our Railways criticised the move and called on the industry to be forced to spend more on new trains.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, ordered a review of the three rolling stock companies - Porterbrook, Eversholt and Angel Train Contracts - in January. The move followed widespread criticism over their bumper profits and the fortunes made by British Rail managers who bought them on the cheap when they were privatised. A report in March from the National Audit Office concluded that the taxpayer had been short-changed by up to £900m.

In his report to Mr Prescott yesterday, Mr Swift said regulation of the rolling stock market should be introduced only as a last resort. Instead, he recommended that the industry be governed by voluntary codes of conduct and the powers under the Government's new Competition Bill.

One of the biggest areas of concern is the fear that the leasing companies may abuse their market power when existing contracts come to an end and train operating companies need to renegotiate leases early next century.

Mr Swift said it was important not to lay down rigid controls, which would be inappropriate to deal with possible abuses when the leases, which cover 11,000 existing vehicles, start to come up for renewal.

Stagecoach, which owns the train leasing company Porterbrook, welcomed the regulator's review. Mike Kinski, chief executive, said it would bring greater certainty and encourage more investment in rolling stock. Stagecoach shares rose 9.5p to 1215.5p.

Angel Train Contracts, which was taken over by Royal Bank of Scotland last December, said it looked forward to drawing up a code of conduct in consultation with the regulator.

But Jonathan Bray, of Save Our Railways, said it was imperative the leasing companies, which made combined profits of £348m last year, were compelled to invest more. "We need tough action on the rolling stock companies who are currently profiting from old and overcrowded trains to the tune of £1m a day," he added.

The pressure group said that in the four years since privatisation only 961 vehicles had been ordered, against the 2,000 BR delivered in the five years prior to that.

But Mr Swift said that orders worth almost £2bn for 2,000 new vehicles had been placed and that there was no need for regulation of new rolling stock orders since there was a growing competitive market for financing.

He also came down against any further mergers between rolling stock and train operating companies. Stagecoach also owns South West Trains but Royal Bank of Scotland, which owns Angel, and HSBC, owner of Eversholt, have no passenger train franchises.

By Michael Harrison

THE WATER regulator clashed with the Government yesterday after opposing plans by ministers to ban suppliers from disconnecting customers who fail to pay.

Ian Byatt, the director general of water services, warned that such a move could increase water bills significantly. He also voiced doubts about giving customers the universal right to have water meters installed free of charge.

In his response to the consultation paper on water charging from Michael Meacher, the environment minister, Mr Byatt said: "Ofwat believes that the threat of disconnection is important. Without it, some customers may decide they do not need to pay. Rising levels of uncollected accounts will lead to pressure for high bills for water customers as a whole."

His comments were welcomed by the water industry. Pamela Taylor, chief executive of Water UK, said that Mr Byatt had "hit the nail on the head".

According to a survey by the organisation, which represents water companies in England and Wales, the level of bad debts could rise by 300 per cent if water companies were prevented from disconnecting customers for non-payment. Bad debts are currently running at about

Ian Byatt said that the proposed ban on disconnection could lead to increased bills for other consumers



£90m a year, or 1.5 per cent of turnover.

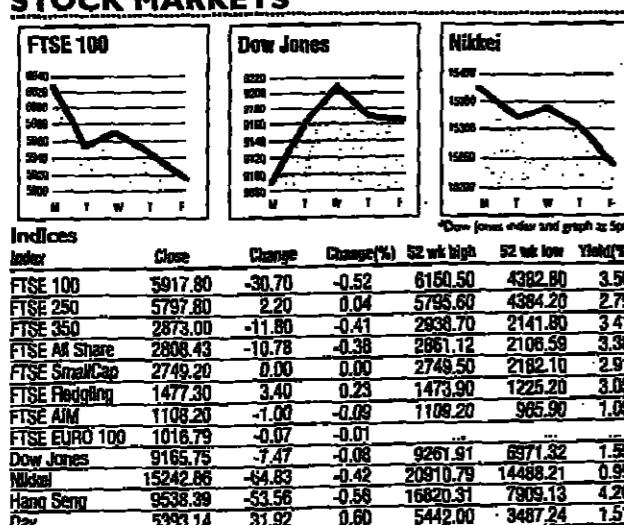
Ofwat's latest figures show that the number of customers disconnected for non-payment fell sharply last year for the sixth year running. In 1997-98 disconnections fell to 1,907 - a drop of 39 per cent on the 3,148 recorded in 1996-97.

Mr Byatt said that demonstrated that the water companies were getting better in their ability to differentiate between customers who were unwilling to pay their bills and those who were unable to do so.

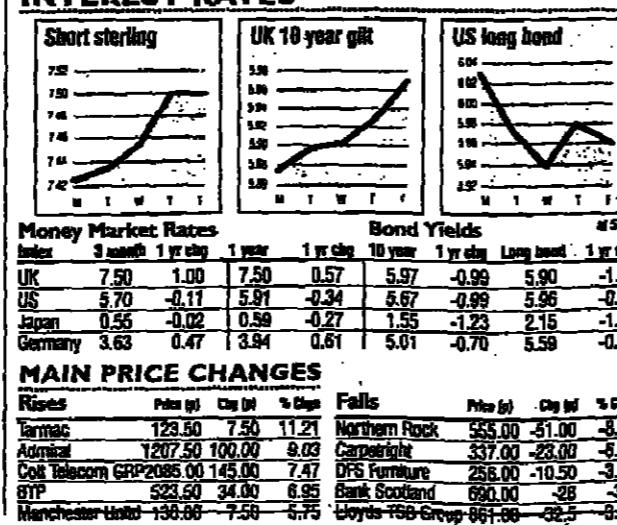
He said there was a need to strike a fair balance between meeting the needs of vulnerable customers and ensuring sensible and sustainable water usage.

Yesterday in the markets

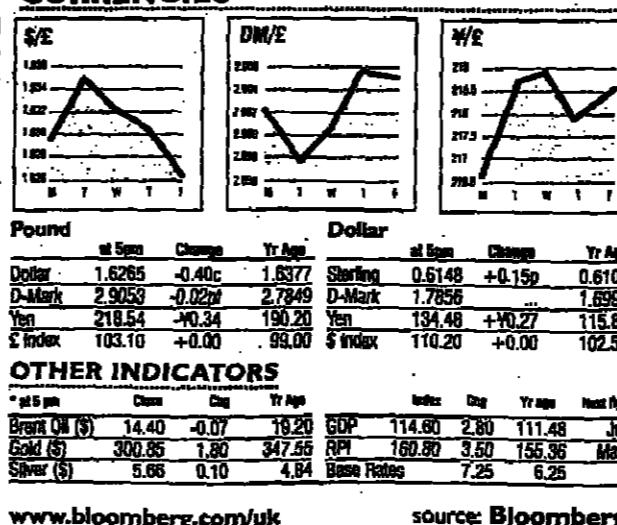
STOCK MARKETS



INTEREST RATES



CURRENCIES



TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5243	Malta (lira)	0.6176
Austria (schilling)	19.84	Mexico (new peso)	12.58
Belgium (francs)	58.25	Netherlands (guilder)	3.1794
Canada (\$)	2.3030	New Zealand (\$)	2.9422
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8283	Norway (krone)	11.92
Denmark (krone)	10.62	Portugal (escudos)	287.90
Finland (markka)	8.6460	Saudi Arabia (riyal)	5.9474
France (francs)	9.4697	Singapore (\$)	2.5545
Germany (marks)	2.8330	Spain (pesetas)	239.19
Greece (drachma)	485.67	South Africa (rand)	7.9838
Hong Kong (\$)	12.26	Sweden (krona)	12.31
Ireland (pounds)	1.1175	Switzerland (francs)	2.3561
India (rupee)	61.12	Taiwan (taiwan)	57.03
Italy (lira)	2797	Turkey (lira)	395.845
Japan (yen)	214.92	USA (\$)	1.5045
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.6072		

Rates for indication purposes only.
Source: Thomas Cook

www.bloomberg.com/uk

source: Bloomberg

Firms quit Jakarta as panic spreads

By Lea Paterson

BIG BUSINESS yesterday began moving staff out of Indonesia, as economic activity ground to a halt and financial markets the world over felt the ripples of the crisis.

Total, the French oil group, was among the Western companies which activated evacuation plans. Total has hired a charter plane to evacuate the families of its expatriate personnel - commercial flights out of the country are fully booked.

Many US firms have begun to move staff out, including BankAmerica and American Express. Nokia, the Finnish telecom company, said most of its employees had already left Jakarta, whilst Ericsson, the Swedish telecom company, said it was flying out 100 of its 500 Indonesian employees.

Most businesses were closed in Jakarta. General Motors, British Aerospace, BP, Toshiba and Mitsubishi were among the multi-nationals which have temporarily suspended operations. A General Motors spokesman said he had "no idea" when its Jakarta-based assembly plant and two parts plants would reopen.

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On the international markets, the Indonesian rupiah rose, as brokers said the cost of "shorting the currency" was rising. Meanwhile, on Jakarta stock exchange, only a handful of shares changed hands.

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The Indonesian crisis has reawakened market concerns about the stability of the Japanese banks. According to the Bank of International Settlements, Japanese banks are the biggest lenders to Indonesia. At the end of June last year, the banks had a combined exposure of \$23.14bn (£13.7bn).

The international financial community also expressed concern about the delay to settlements caused by the unexpected closure of the Indonesian financial markets. "We're hoping the settlements will be made on Monday, but there's no way of being sure," said one source.

UK companies were generally taking a more conservative approach to the crisis than their US counterparts. Standard Chartered, the banking group, said its offices were closed, but there were no immediate plans to evacuate. HSBC took a similar stance, and British Aerospace said, although its offices were closed, there were no immediate plans to move staff out.



JEREMY
WARNER
ON MEETING
BILL GATES
AND THE
MISTAKE HE'S
MADE IN NOT
BACKING OFF
EARLIER

Unbundling Bill Gates and why it's so hard

IT'S A CURIOUS experience meeting Bill Gates, the world's richest and most successful businessman. I've met many powerful and successful industrialists, but nothing compares to the feeling of awe you get when given this opportunity. The anticipation is of being ushered into the presence of some demi-god. It's nerve wracking and you worry the experience will strike you dumb.

And then it happens and he is none of the things you thought: he's easy going, laid-back, charming, accessible, possibly even sensitive. Certainly he seems genuinely hurt by the persistent attacks on his company that now litter the internet and the pages of the world's press. Meeting this faintly shy, awkward man for the first time three months ago at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, I found it hard to credit him with being the evil monopolist he's now often depicted as.

The idle chit chat dispensed with - hello, how are you, where do you come from, oh, *The Independent*, good paper, and so on - he takes the rostrum before a small gathering of editors and financial journalists. Mr Gates has long been the most fascinating business story of recent times. Now, with the US Justice Department threatening to issue an all-embracing anti-trust suit against him, the story is about to go nuclear.

I heard he was inarticulate and unconvincing; he's not. He's persuasive and

compelling as he takes on the case against him. But as with all those who preach a message, he deals only in generalisations. They are good ones, all the same. He talks about the huge benefits his operating system and applications software have brought to business throughout the world. People don't have to buy our products or upgrades, he says, nor do we use our position to restrict trade or stifle competition.

The usual characteristics of monopoly - restricted output, rising prices and insurmountable barriers to entry - simply are not there in our case, he insists. In fact prices are falling by an order of magnitude; production is rising and new companies and competitors are continually entering the market place.

Mr Gates plainly still has some friends. Later that day I heard a Nobel prize-winning economics professor take the defense of Microsoft a stage further. He argued that since the Windows monopoly was created by the market, and since it wasn't immediately apparent it was doing any harm, it was bad policy to attack it. The US Justice Department, he claimed, simply wasn't equipped to judge a new techno-monopoly, nor did it have the laws with which to do so. As for the "bundling" of Microsoft's Internet browser and other applications with its PC operating system, he thought that a non-issue. The bundling of products together for sale is com-

mon throughout commerce and should be dealt with on a case by case basis.

He also took the view that Microsoft had a fundamental right to profit from the monopoly of its operating system, a monopoly achieved simply because Microsoft was a clever organisation commercially. Was that not the ice-cold, calculating look of the consummate predator I had caught in Mr Gates's eyes amid the bon amis and smiles? How is it possible to grow from nothing in little more than 20 years to the third largest company by market value in the world without monopoly of a big and fast growing market?

I have to admit, I came away from Davos feeling all warm inside about Microsoft. I was seduced, I really was. Joel Klein and the US Justice Department were most definitely barking up the wrong tree. They were the type that believed all business was theft, and if they could build up enough of a head of steam against a successful business enterprise, they would attack and destroy it. IBM spent 19 years defending what proved to be an ultimately groundless anti-trust suit from the US Justice Department. The process was so distracting for management that it virtually destroyed the company.

Is this really what the US wants to do to Microsoft? Of course Sun Microsystems, Novell and Netscape would like to see Mi-

crosoft brought low and broken up, but what competitor wouldn't want to do that to its rivals. If government is stupid enough to do the job for them, so much the better.

Well, that was my frame of mind at the time but as I descended from the rarefied Alpine air, the doubts began to surface again. Was that not the ice-cold, calculating look of the consummate predator I had caught in Mr Gates's eyes amid the bon amis and smiles? How is it possible to grow from nothing in little more than 20 years to the third largest company by market value in the world without monopoly of a big and fast growing market?

Furthermore I've begun to believe the black propaganda about Windows, that though its price is falling and each upgrade makes it better, it nonetheless may not be a very good operating system. But because everyone else has it, and the overwhelming bulk of other software is designed to operate on it, we have no option but to buy it. Worse, we have no option but to buy each new upgraded version of it. If Windows 98 is not launched because of action by the Justice Department, it will be a blow not just to Microsoft, but to Intel and the legion of hardware producers which rely on each successive upgrade to boost sales of new PCs. It is easy to see how the operating system becomes a conspiracy against the public.

Then there is the opportunity Microsoft

has to use this gateway to promote and sell its applications software at the expense of others. This is what lies at the heart of the Justice Department case against Microsoft. A dominant but inadequate operating system is one thing, but to use that to disadvantage rivals in the applications market is another altogether. This may be a new and vibrant industry, but actually what seems to be happening is not so very different from what happens with all monopolies. One monopoly is used to build another, to cross subsidise into other markets and to freeze out those who would compete in them.

The US has a long history and tradition of trust-busting. Each onslaught has prompted the same siren voices, the same dire warnings over the consequences of attacking and breaking up successful companies. In each case, the US economy has survived and prospered. It is one of the great paradoxes of the free market system that it produces these wonderful breakthroughs, these extraordinary companies and entrepreneurs, but to protect that power of invention and enterprise it needs constantly to cleanse itself of them. The market cannot be relied on to self correct. There must always be a referee.

As for Mr Gates, I believe he has made a serious strategic error in not backing off at an earlier stage. It may now be too late to reverse the tide of hostility building against him.

Allied Carpets adds to high street gloom

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

THERE WAS further evidence of a slowdown in consumer spending yesterday when Allied Carpets issued a profits warning sending its shares into freefall.

The warning follows weak high street sales figures for April reported by the British Retail Consortium on Monday and comes just two months after similar warnings from DFS Furniture, MFI and Carpetright.

John Lewis, the department store group, added to the bad news yesterday when it reported only a modest sales increase in the week to 9 May. It blamed the good weather last weekend which "drew cus-

tomers away from shopping to other pursuits".

Allied Carpets said recent trading conditions had been difficult, particularly over Easter and the May Day bank holiday.

"There seems to be a distinct lack of consumer confidence," said managing director Ray Nethercott. "We are just not getting the customers into the stores."

Ally

Carpets

shares plunged 34.5 per cent to 89p on the news, a fraction of their 215p issue price upon flotation two years ago. The warning dragged down shares in other retailers of higher ticket goods like MFI and Carpetright.

Mr Nethercott blamed a combination of higher interest rates and the strong pound which had affected workers in manufacturing industries.

"We are finding that the further north we go the worse it is for us," Mr Nethercott said.

"If people are working less overtime they are more likely to think twice about investing a substantial sum in a carpet."

Allied Carpets' average selling price is more than £1,000.

Brokers have downgraded their forecasts from £19m to £13m as a result. The company said it was maintaining the full year dividend.

Some analysts suggested Allied Carpets could now be a takeover target. However, the identity of a likely bidder is unclear. Carpetright, the main rival could expect to fall foul of the competition authorities.

in January and continued to trade well in February and March. But over the crucial Easter period its sales were 10 per cent below those of last year.

It said it expected the trend to continue and that its full year profits would now be "considerably below" the £16.2m achieved last year.

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Liffe members angry about delay in restructuring vote

MEMBERS of Liffe, London's troubled futures and options exchange, yesterday expressed frustration at the decision to delay a key vote on restructuring proposals. David Kyte, a former Liffe board member and a vociferous critic of the exchange, called the board "totally incompetent". Other Liffe members echoed Mr Kyte's impatience.

Liffe said it had decided to delay the extraordinary general meeting from 21 May to early June because members needed 14 days to consider detailed board proposals for change. Liffe's board met last week to discuss details of share ownership reform - one of a variety of proposals designed to reverse the market's flagging fortunes. The exchange originally intended to circulate these proposals to members earlier this week. Now the proposals will not go out until at least the end of next week.

Microsoft talks begin

FEDERAL and state officials began face-to-face meetings with lawyers from Microsoft yesterday in an effort to reach a settlement of threatened government antitrust lawsuits. They included William Neukom, Microsoft's chief lawyer, and assistant attorney general Joel Klein. The settlement were announced on Thursday, just as the Justice Department and a number of states planned to file antitrust lawsuits accusing Microsoft of abusing its power and driving competitors from the lucrative software market. The Justice Department has said that it will delay filing any lawsuit against the company while the settlement talks take place.

Solar-powered football

BP and Newcastle United plc plan to create the world's largest solar-powered sports stadium. The 350 kilowatt solar project is part of Newcastle's plans to upgrade its current 36,000-seater St James' Park stadium to 51,000-seater capacity. BP which is also the world's largest solar energy company, said the grid-connected solar plant would meet 10 per cent of the stadium's electricity needs.

BT 'in no hurry for deal'

BRITISH TELECOM would be a very good partner for a US company but was not in a hurry for a deal despite the failure of its merger with MCI, Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, said yesterday. "We are not in a hurry. Firstly because MCI has continued to support Concert in the US for many years and more importantly because we are not authorised to conclude a new US partnership as long as the MCI-Worldcom merger is not finalised," he told a French newspaper.

Call to scrap pension safeguard

BRITAIN'S £850bn pension fund industry is calling on the Government to scrap a key legal safeguard designed to prevent a repeat of the Maxwell affair. The National Association of Pension Funds is lobbying ministers to end the minimum funding requirement (MFR), a central plank of the 1995 Pensions Act. Peter Murray, chairman of NAPE, said the association would urge the Government to adopt a less cumbersome means of guaranteeing the security of members' pension rights.

Stoves warns on profits

STOVES GROUP, the oven maker, said yesterday it did not expect annual profits to meet expectations as they are likely to be around last year's level. Stoves reported pre-tax profits of £5.2m in the year to May. Shares in Stoves tumbled to close 49p, or almost 25 per cent, lower at 158.5p.

WHO'S SUING WHO



JOHN WILLCOCK

A LEGAL war has broken out over the ownership of English football on the Internet.

Even the Internet "domain" name of the national side, "englandfc.co.uk", is under dispute, in a case which could cost leading clubs huge amounts of money.

The Football Association and 17 mainly Premiership football clubs are suing a one-man firm which has registered their names on the Internet and is seeking to sell the names back to them for hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Domain names such as "arsenal.co.uk", "newcastlefc.co.uk" and "tottenhamhotspurfc.co.uk" have been registered at £120 a go by Champion Press, a firm based in Sidcup, Kent, and its proprietor Brian Pead.

Mr Pead remained defiant yesterday, despite having received a writ from the FA and 17 clubs last Tuesday. He said: "We legally own these domains outright. That is not in dispute."

A spokesman for the FA said last night: "It certainly is in dispute as far as we're concerned."

The FA decided to coordinate a legal action after hearing about Mr Pead's contact with Sheffield Wednesday last October. According to Tuesday's writ, Mr Pead wrote to the club saying: "However, we are prepared to sell the (sheffieldwednesday.co.uk) website for the sum of £95,000."

Considering that registration of the name with UK internet firm Nominet had cost Mr Pead just £120, the FA's writ added: "The price asked by the defendants therefore involved a mark-up

of approximately 79,000 per cent."

The FA's writ claims that "the defendants have obtained the ... domains in order to sell them at a grossly inflated price."

The Defendants ... threaten and intend to hold the ... goodwill of the Plaintiffs to ransom."

Champion Press and Mr Pead "do not have any legitimate purpose for registering the ... domains", the writ says.

The FA and the clubs are applying for an injunction to stop Champion Press from "infringing the plaintiff's registered trademarks" and also to stop them "passing off or attempting to pass off ... Internet domain names not being the services of the plaintiffs."

The clubs are also asking the court for an Order that Champion Press transfers the domain names to the respective clubs" and any similar name or names which the defendants have registered or caused to be registered for use on the Internet."

The FA and the 17 clubs are using the FA's usual City law firm Denton Hall to issue the writ and fight the case.

It is understood that the FA's camp will be relying heavily on a decision given by Jonathan Sumption QC, when he was sitting as a deputy High Court judge last November.

The decision concerned the "One in a Million" case. The defendant had registered the names of various companies on the Internet, and was sued for passing off and trademark infringement. Mr Sumption QC found against the defendants and ordered that the domain names be assigned to the respective plaintiffs.

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Graca Machel, who will be speaking out at the G8 summit

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

How my love for Nelson Mandela changed my life

IT IS NOT just Nelson Mandela who has helped heal the wounds in the heart of Graca Machel. For five years she wore black, in mourning for the death of her husband, Samora Machel, the founding president of Mozambique who died in 1986 when his presidential jet crashed mysteriously into a South African hillside, murdered she has adamantly maintained ever since – by agents of the apartheid regime. Today she is the woman who walks publicly hand in hand with President Mandela, her head against his shoulder, and who has made him, he says, late in life, bloom like a flower. "I am in love with a remarkable lady," the 80-year-old president has said. "She has changed my life."

He has changed hers too. "I am very happy," she said this week in London, beaming when the conversation moved from the unhappy subject of Third World debt, which is this weekend on the agenda of the world leaders gathered in Birmingham for the G8 summit. She is an elegant animated woman who laughs a lot, when the moment is apt.

Her friendship with Mr Mandela – whom she calls by the affectionate nickname Mandiba – began in 1986 after the imprisoned leader wrote from Robben Island expressing his condolences over her husband's death. She had been left with a son and a daughter, aged seven and 10, and five step-children.

When they met for the first time in 1990 soon after his release both were aware on an instant rapport which began to grow into a friendship when they met again in 1992 when Mrs Machel received an honorary degree from a South African university. Then in 1993 the African National Congress president, Oliver Tambo, who was godfather to her children, died and Mr Mandela took over as the role and the relationship between the couple grew. After it became clear that Mr Mandela's marriage to Winnie was beyond repair, he began to go Mozambique for the weekend "to get away". The couple realised they had fallen in love.

Paul Vallely talks to Graca Machel about death, her new lease of life and her charity foundation

longer there. As minister of education I dealt with policy formation and macro-economics. And, yes, at the end of the year you know how many people graduate, but you don't touch any one in your everyday life. But here the people I deal with each have a face. It is a two-way process. We receive from them the lessons that they have to teach. It is more human and much more fulfilling. Through this small charity, with only a \$1.5m turnover, I found a meaningful way of continuing to be alive."

Her combined understanding of macro-economics and its impact at the

survive till we reach the long run." According to the World Bank's Human Development Report an extra 21 million people will die in the Third World between now and 2000 if debt relief is not secured. How can we postpone our right to live? It's not negotiable. The high rate of malnutrition affects the brain – these children may live physically but they will be handicapped intellectually. Such things are criminal. They are silent ways of killing."

Finding the time to carry on her work – and she has recently completed a report for the UN on the fate of children caught up in war – is not easy when she is now involved in a relationship with Mr Mandela which involves international commuting and daily telephone calls during their frequent separations.

"It's difficult," she said. "But it's only a 45-minute flight from Maputo to Johannesburg. The real difficulty is having two families, but I love my children and I love him too. If you love somebody you find a way of doing it."

As to reports from Mozambique that she would be standing for president in 1999, they were "nonsense". It is the year in which Mr Mandela will retire and from which point she hopes to help him experience the normal family life he has never had – and find the time to enjoy with him the things he loves doing for which his office never gives him time.

And would they be getting married?

"I don't want to talk about it," she said with a squeal of laughter. Was she still talking to Mr Mandela's fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who had publicly complained about their "intimate relationship outside marriage"?

"He's a good friend to Mandiba and he's a good friend to me. He was, and he still is. Of course, we don't ignore what he says, but I don't think we're a bad example to the youth of South Africa. I don't think they see us that way. I don't think it affects the way people in Mozambique think about me and it certainly doesn't lessen Mandiba's authority."

'I don't think we're a bad example to South Africa's youth. It doesn't lessen his authority'

loans to small groups of farmers and women to help them generate income for themselves," she said. "We help in kind too, giving goats and cattle from which they breed until they can afford to return the number they were given. We help train and equip women in sewing. And we help build up the skills of indigenous NGOs."

At first sight it may seem an odd move for the woman who was once a guerrilla in the fight to liberate the country from Portuguese rule and then became the only female in the Mozambican cabinet – she was education minister for many years, even carrying on for three years after her husband's death. In 1989, she persuaded the new president to accept her resignation and withdraw from public life.

"I had to rethink, to gather all the scattered pieces of myself. I had to acknowledge that somehow I had been handicapped, that part of myself was no

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



A man's game

Justin Fashanu, Britain's first openly gay professional footballer, hanged himself earlier this month. Tobias Jones examines a life full of contradictions

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TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 16 May 1998



PICTURE OF THE WEEK Lights, camera ... Reflections in Cannes harbour during this week's film festival. Photograph by Brian Harris. To order a print of this picture (12x9in) call 0171-293 2534

Week in, week out

William Hartston reveals the hitherto unsuspected connection between Robin Cook and artificial insemination for koalas

The sex organs of mice are stunted by a chemical compound used in a protective coating on human teeth, according to this week's *New Scientist*. The same day that the disturbing report appeared, there came the news from Australia of the birth of the world's first koala conceived by artificial insemination. The day before, the authorities in Taiwan announced that they had built an overhead crossing in a national park to help Formosan rock monkeys to cross a busy road without being hit by cars, while in Japan the ethics committee of the Saitama Medical College granted a request for the nation's first officially sanctioned sex-change operation.

Meanwhile, in the courtrooms of North America, a Canadian dominatrix threatened to bring the tools of her trade into court to prove that her services were no more than legal, role-playing fantasy games, and a New Yorker was charged with selling tapes over the Internet of partially clad women stamping on small animals. A man in Florida, however, was told that he could not legally offer to swap one of his kidneys for a boat; a pest-control company in Tucson, Arizona, offered a \$50,000 reward for the person catching a specially marked cockroach; French researchers began a study involving white rats drinking burgundy, and American doctors

reported that high heels may be a cause of arthritis in women. Is it not now blindingly obvious what has been going on at the Foreign Office? Do not the above items all point unerringly to a single conclusion? Do they not completely exonerate Robin Cook of all culpability in the arms to Africa affair? Because how can we attach any blame to a man who, from all the evidence above, must have thought the deal was no more than a simple trade in film props? Let me explain...

Just suppose a hastily scribbled sheet of A4 paper is pushed into your bulging in-tray containing the words "export of armaments" and "S. Leone". Would not any Foreign Secretary in his right mind assume this was something to do with a spaghetti western? What the forthcoming investigations will reveal, however, is a far more complex tale.

The "S. Leone" referred to in the Foreign Office documents is not, in fact, the film-maker Sergio Leone, but his lesser-known little sister Sierra (whose mother, incidentally, was celebrated in the 1947 Humphrey Bogart classic *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*). Consistently upset by her brother, Sierra was driven into the seediest areas of the film industry.

When the arms to Africa crisis erupted, Foreign Office officials, using an Internet

search in an attempt to find out the exact location of Sierra Leone, were led to a website selling pornographic videos with titles such as *Vanessa's Frog Stomp*.

But who was this Vanessa, star also of *Vanessa, Topless Destructor*, who trampled on small animals while wearing stiletto heels? The Reuters report of this strange foot-fetishistic bestial sadism ends with the

Would not any Foreign Secretary in his right mind think Sierra Leone had something to do with spaghetti westerns?

words: "They are still looking for the women in the videos"; presumably to warn them about the potential danger of arthritis. They will not easily identify her, however, since she has gone to Japan for a sex change. The Japanese case is indeed one of a female-to-male swap.

But what sort of perverted character could possibly want to purchase such videos? Is this not exactly the sort of per-

son who would sell his kidney in order to buy a boat to sail to Australia to procure more of this type of filth? Because—make no mistake about it—Ms Leone is now playing her vile trade in Brisbane, as the artificially inseminated koala story makes clear. Here are the relevant passages from the Reuters report: "The problem with artificially inseminating a koala was that, like the domestic cat, it required the physical act of mating to trigger the release of the egg from the follicle on the ovary... semen was collected from a male koala using an artificial vagina." Michael McGowan, a researcher at the University of Queensland, said of the resulting birth: "We are confident this is a world first in the field of research is so small."

Now I don't know much about the sex aids for marsupials industry, but I'd wager a tidy sum that Sierra Leone has access to artifical koala vaginas. It's just the sort of thing a certain type of man would give his right kidney for. Has there not been a disturbing silence from the Foreign Office in recent weeks on the subject of export licences for artificial koala vaginas?

And what may we expect next from Ms Leone? The Taiwanese are already taking steps to protect their monkeys from a

remake of *Crash*, but the news from France is even worse. Those Burgundy-

swilling rats are ostensibly part of a study to investigate the role played by resveratrol, a chemical found in grape skins, in protecting from blood clots and heart attacks. Only last week, however, in a survey in the United States 34.8 per cent of adolescent males admitted that either they or their partner was drunk or high on drugs when they last had intercourse.

The vileness of it all is almost impossible to believe: someone is trying to get rats drunk so they will have sex with koalas. No wonder the court in Toronto is so worried about allowing their dominatrix defendant to bring her equipment into court. "Exhibit A, m'lud: an artificial koala vagina with drunken white rat attached." The rat itself, of course, can hardly be expected to testify after it has been intimidated by the threat of having its sex organs bitten by a wicked film director with that organ-shrivelling coating on her teeth.

And is that \$50,000 cockroach a simple prize in a pest-control promotion, as we are led to believe? Or is it the specially trained animal star of Sierra Leone Productions plc—the prize put up by the FBI in an attempt to get the cockroach to testify for the prosecution as they build up their case against Ms Sierra Leone?

Robin Cook clearly has a great deal to answer for.



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A very rough guide to Jerusalem (1841 Edition).^{!!}

CATHEDRAL OF THE APPEAL, the remarkable story of Delia Smith and her missionary father, who travelled to Jerusalem in 1841, to found a church in the Holy Land. Saturday afternoon, 16 May, 2.30 - 3.00.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Walking on water



Clevedoners have pulled off a miracle, with the restoration of the 'most beautiful pier in England', writes Jane Lovatt

We walked along until we came to plank 28, and there was our little romantic tribute. A small brass plaque bearing the inscription "Jane Loves Chris". Better than a park bench any day and worth every penny of the £15 it cost to restore this tiny section of Clevedon Pier, in Somerset.

"The most beautiful pier in England. Its demolition would be a tragedy," wrote Sir John Betjeman of this delightful structure. Even those with no interest in seaside architecture would be bound to agree. Built on tall, spindly yet elegant legs, it reminds me of a gangly stalk, or a newborn Bambi just about to wobble into the sea.

The newly restored pier brings to life completely the sleepy yet pretty Victorian resort of Clevedon. Unsuspecting visitors are taken by surprise when they reach the promenade and see this outstretched walkway of grace and simple beauty reaching into the Bristol Channel. No wonder local residents were devastated when it collapsed during load-testing in 1970.

Happily, they can now look forward to a joyful day for their town when, on 23 May, the pier will be reopened, resplendent in its refurbished glory. Great celebrations are to take place, the like of which have

not been seen in Clevedon since the pier was first opened on Easter Sunday 1869. This time the man cutting the ribbon will be Sir Charles Elton, whose great-grandfather built the pier. Thousands turned out to witness the first opening and enjoy the general holiday granted in the pier's honour. A spectacular procession wound its way through the town and on to the promenade. Five hundred children sang a psalm, the First Somerset Artillery fired a cannon volley and a massed band played the National Anthem.

For 20 years the pier provided a new fast route to South Wales, until the railways took over. Later it became an important embarkation point for excursion ships, notably the Waverley paddle steamer, *Brian-*

nia, which still has strong connections with the pier. Clevedon flourished as a seaside resort, and the pier continued to be a great attraction as well as a source of local pride and pleasure. All was going swimmingly until 1970, when the two end spans collapsed. Clearly demolition was unthinkable - the pier was just too lovely. So in 1972 the Clevedon Pier Preservation Trust was set up. Clevedonians, passionate about their precious planks, got together and threw themselves into fundraising. English Heritage, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the National Lottery have given major sums; other donations have come from pier fans such as myself and my boyfriend, who sponsored part of a plank.

Much of the £3m required to rebuild this grade

Promenade restored: Clevedon pier in the 1890s, left, and back in fully functioning order today
Main photograph: Tom Pistor

two listed building, however, has come from the proceeds of local events such as beach barbecues, sponsored walks and fishing marathons. No wonder Clevedonians are so proud that their beloved pier, which was partially reopened in 1989, is now just as it used to be.

"The original weather shelters and the pagoda are back in place," says Ivor Ashford, the present-day piermaster. "A lot of dedication and hard work have gone into this project, and we in Clevedon are very excited about 23 May. We are going to try to recreate the original opening ceremony as closely as possible, and we hope that visitors will wear Victorian dress if they can. A striped bathing suit and a straw hat would be perfect."

So if you're looking for a truly English seaside trip to enliven your bank holiday weekend, head for Clevedon, 20 minutes' drive from Bristol. Proceedings kick off at 10.30am with a procession along the beach led by the Plymouth Regiment Royal Marine band. Sir Charles Elton, accompanied by the world-famous bowler David Bryant OBE, who is a local resident, will declare the pier open, and there will be four sailings by the *Brannia*.

There will also be wing-walking, an air display, an air/sea rescue demonstration, street entertainment galore - and, to round it off, a magnificent fireworks display which you can enjoy from the deck of the *Brannia* or from the pier. A grand day out, especially if washed down with lots of Somerset cider. And don't forget to look out for our plaque while you're there.

A plane
ValuJet, the low-fare US airline that suffered the fatal crash of a DC-9 in the Florida Everglades, has been relaunched as AirTran. No-frills flights through Atlanta link cities such as Boston, New York and Washington DC with Orlando, New Orleans and Dallas. New York-Dallas costs \$105 (£65) one-way if you book three days in advance; the Boston-Philadelphia short hop is \$42 (£26) if booked 14 days in advance. Call 001 770 994 8258 for bookings from the UK.

A train
Summer officially begins on Britain's railways next weekend. As *The Independent* has reported, Virgin's west coast service is being challenged by other operators offering slower trains but cheap



A boat
Before you board that Brittany Ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff, call in at the port's new National Marine Aquarium (01752 600301). It is open from 10am to 6pm; adults £5.99, children £3.99.

A room
The same ferry is being used by the British Museum Traveller (0171-323 8895) to investigate the Arthurian Legend. It takes in Somerset and Brittany, plus "the Chateau of Comper-en-Broceliande, a shell built by Merlin to hide the crystal castle built for Vivien, the Lady of the Lake". The six-day tour departs 3 August, cost £675.

A meal
"Greek home cooking can be wonderful,

and the tourism authorities have recently taken a laudable, if long overdue, initiative to persuade restaurants and tavernas to reinvent it. Please boycott any self-service establishment you find; the whole fast-food and self-service culture is so obviously the antithesis of everything the Greek experience offers that such enterprises should be strangled at birth" - Colin Murison Small, in the *Hidden Greece* (0181-766 7868) programme notes for this summer.

A drink
The Bigges Bar, which takes its name from Captain W E Johns's aviation hero, is just the place to steady your nerves before a flight from Lydd International Airport in Kent. Your destination is likely to be Le Touquet, the only route

served by Sky-Trek Airlines (01797 320000), standard return fare, £69.90.

A week from now ...
... the first Milan flight will take off from Stansted with Go (0845 60 54321), British Airways' low-cost airline - fare £100 return. Go will also go to Rome (from next Friday) and Copenhagen (from 5 June). Next week's Time Off will offer a guide to 48 hours in Milan.

A month from now ...
... the traditional ceremony to mark the boundary of Linlithgow takes place in the Royal Burgh, beginning at 5am. If you book two weeks in advance an Apex return from London costs £49. Save £8 by booking one ticket to Edinburgh and a separate one to Linlithgow.



SIMON CALDER

Can aircraft be struck by lightning? Yes, thundered our postbag. In last week's column Time Off's editor, Harriet O'Brien, wrote that she'd been assured planes were safe from lightning strikes because of the absence of an electrical earth. Almost immediately, phone lines crackled and e-mails sparked.

"Of course aircraft can be struck by lightning," writes Norman W Foster of Cambridgeshire, a member of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Hugh de Lacy of Ipswich corrects the widespread misconception that all lightning travels from the sky down to the Earth: "In fact, a lightning strike can occur between any two points in the atmosphere where a sufficiently high potential difference has built up, and many lightning discharges take place from cloud to cloud ("sheet" lightning). It is quite possible for an aircraft near such a potential difference to be struck by lightning; the sharp edges on aircraft structures tend to concentrate an electric field and provide a preferential path for the discharge."

So what are the likely consequences? Could passengers be fried? Mr Foster again: "Except in the case of total loss, harm to occupants is virtually non-existent as they are protected by the same principle which protects car occupants from lightning, where the surrounding metal structure acts as a Faraday cage."

Harriet did not look thrilled when I showed her the line about "total loss". Several pilots, present and past, joined the debate. From Redhill, Geoff Allan reports: "I was captain of an aircraft struck by lightning while descending into Bergen. We lost our navigation aids and compass system and relied on radar to get us in..." Mr Allan says, however, that lightning strikes are now relatively rare - "not because there is less lightning, but because modern aircraft spend most of their time above clouds".

In the Fifties, writes a former pilot signing himself only "John", the risks were higher: "Twice in one week I was flying at night in a Lincoln, an improved version of the Lancaster bomber. On the first occasion, over the Bay of Biscay, the damage consisted of a hole in the starboard wing leading edge, large enough for the crew chief to get his head in (after we had landed), and the radio aerials were burnt off. Later, over the North Sea, the rear gun turret was struck; the cone-shaped flash eliminators on the machine guns were left drooping like melted candles."

Tom Dewis of Powys says that in a flying career of almost 40 years he had "more strikes than I would like to count. One was a case of ball-lightning, where a ball of apparent fire rolled through the cabin." Mr Dewis helpfully adds how you will know if you are in a plane caught in a thunderstorm and don't happen to see that ball of lightning roll past: "You may hear a hollow-sounding bump, followed by a slight smell of ozone. You've had a lightning strike! That's all."

Not quite all, writes Ronald Savage of Liverpool. "On our round-the-world tour in 1992, upon leaving Tokyo on a United Airlines DC10 we had just entered the clouds when there was a hell of a crack and flash shaking the aircraft somewhat (me with crossed legs). The pilot then confirmed we had been struck, but as there was no damage we could continue our flight to Bangkok."

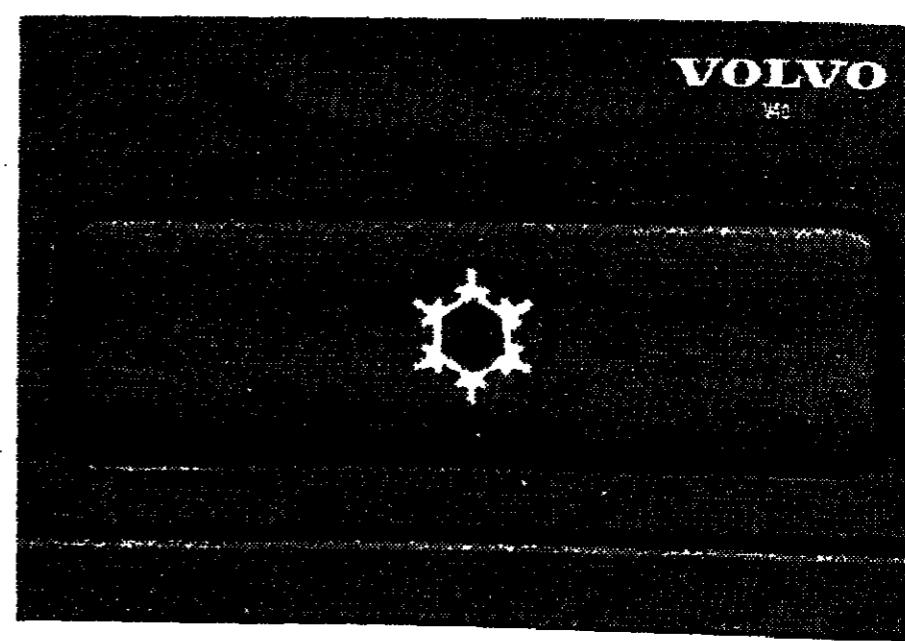
Back to Harriet's fear of flying course: Mr Foster signs off with a PS: "Frozen chickens are not fired into test engines; dead ones yes, but not frozen. Live birds in the sky may be bloody cold, but they are not stiff and solid." And the semi-anonymous John offers an equally chilling postscript: "My best wishes to Harriet. I was going to mention that some years later I was one of only two survivors in a mid-air collision of two jets in cloud - but I don't want to scare her."

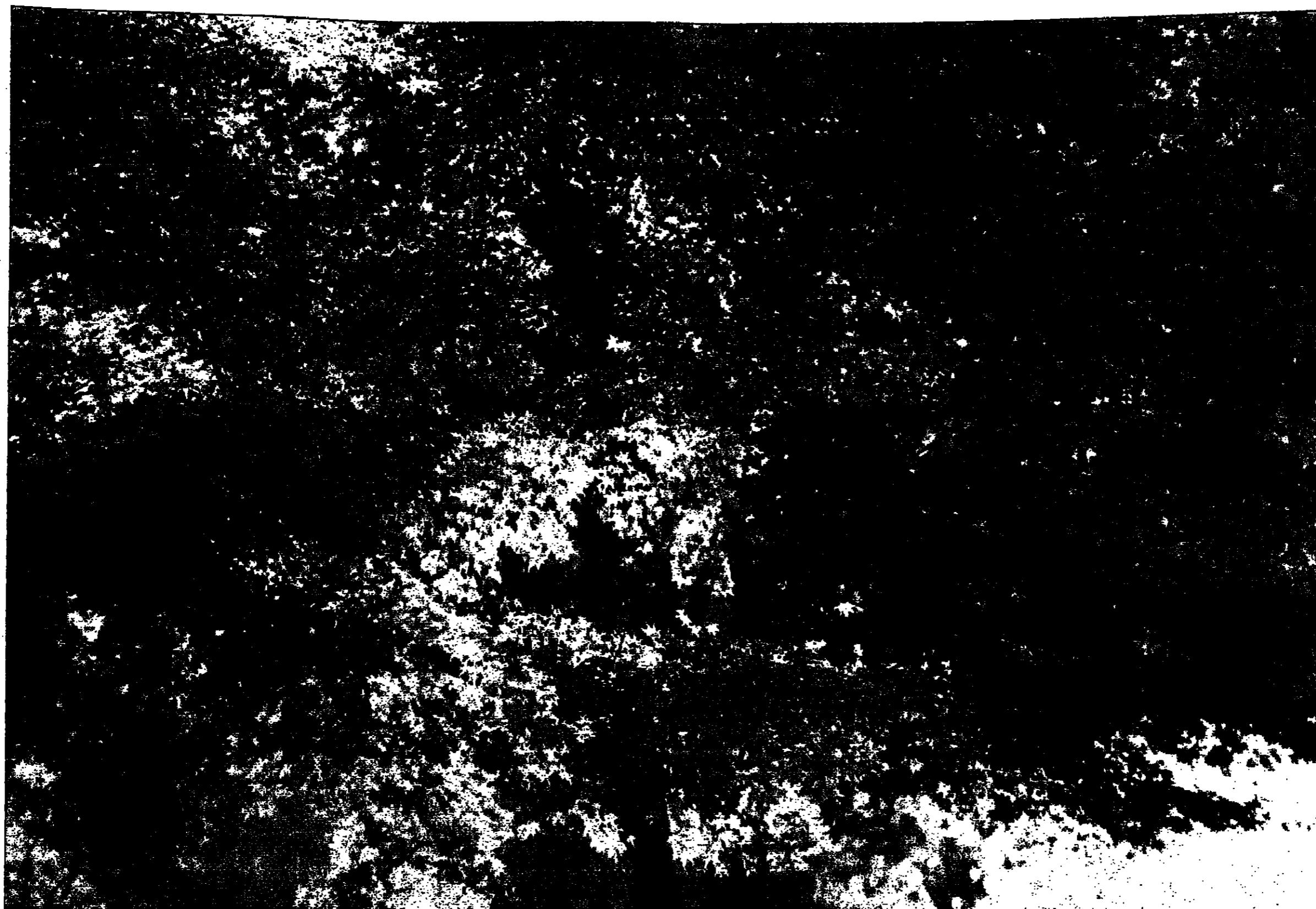
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Modern Japan is ugly. Before going there I had seen photographs of the cherry blossom, the kimonos and the Kabuki theatre, and I had a love for the exquisite ceramics and the purity of design. But in Tokyo what impressed me most were the concrete and frosted glass, the skies darkened by skeins of cables and the brand-new reproductions of ancient monuments.

I left Tokyo and travelled Kyoto, Okayama, Osaka, Nagasaki – the sameness stamped them all. Dissatisfied, I wondered what had happened to the poetry of Japan. Had it all been buried in concrete? At the time I was reading a book by an American, Alex Kerr, who wrote about an 18th-century thatched house he had lived in during the Seventies, in a Shangri-La high in the mountains of the Iya valley. The house was called Chioiri – House of the Flute. It sounded so idyllic, so different from anything else I had seen in Japan, that I decided to go there.

With my limited Japanese and my guidebook maps, it took two days to find Chioiri. The first night I spent out in the countryside in a Buddhist temple that doubled as a youth hostel. It was shut when I arrived, as it was a festival day, but I managed to persuade the monk to let me stay the night. The best part of the experience was the large, rectangular wooden bath made of scented pine. Stepping myself in the deep, hot water was pure heaven.

I spent most of the following day getting on the wrong trains and retracing my steps, but I was fixed on the idea of getting to Chioiri, and the more impossible it seemed, the more determined I was to get there. I asked everyone I met whether they knew the place, and showed them a crumpled piece of paper with "Chioiri" written on it. They all looked blank, until at last a bus driver took the paper in his white-gloved hand and nodded. I was on my way. It was late afternoon when I boarded the bus at Ikeda; at last I had a sense that I was on the brink of uncovering something real, something beautiful, in modern Japan.

The bus trundled along a mountain path, over a bridge and up into the Iya valley. The window framed a panorama of hills tufted with pines, broken by the occasional burst of cherry blossom and the distant, jade-green river below, with mists coming out of the deep throat of the gorge. All this was what I had hoped for, yearned for. Tokyo was a million light years away.

Two hours later we reached a fork in the road and the driver told me to get off and take the right-hand fork up the mountain. Abandoned vans and cars lined this road and I contemplated spending the night in one of them if a hotel did not miraculously present itself. A truck approached and I hitched a lift with two country girls in starched white bonnets. Eventually the truck stopped abruptly and the driver pointed to a half-hidden thatched roof below us. "House," he said, in faltering English.

A narrow path between the fields led to a squat, one-storey house topped by a stupendous roof, the rethatching of which had cost the owner such a fortune that he had moved out and abandoned Chioiri. There it stood, empty, with sliding paper doors slightly ajar and a pair of slippers on a stone. I changed into the slippers and slipped into the house. I could see, even in the engulfing darkness, that it was beautiful. The polished wooden floors

House in the rising sun

In a mystical cottage in a hidden valley, Deborah Nash discovered a Japan she thought had gone for ever



Japan still exists – if you know where to go. Photographs: Thomas Hoepker/Magnum (above); Jean Mulatier /Frank Spooner Pictures

Inside the giant electron

British Airways has announced the best-ever deal to Tokyo and back – £300 return. Simon Calder recommends the ultimate urban experience

"Never trust a city you can walk across in under an hour," a resident of Rio once warned me. She would place complete metropolitan faith in Tokyo; by some measures, the Japanese capital extends for 300 miles, to embrace Osaka in the world's greatest megapolis. Even the most hardened city-dweller could find that scary – until you find yourself swept along in the swell of humanity surging through the city and discover that, up close, Tokyo looks after you like no other city.

The challenge is to decipher it. After several visits, I realised that the code is absurdly simple: a circular railway called Yamanote. Unlike London's Circle Line, the Yamanote is elevated. Take a couple of circuits to assess the city, and gasp at the staggering scale of Tokyo.

The security derives from the ease with which the city breaks down into small, manageable chunks. Around each Yamanote Line station clusters a community to be explored with safety.

As with the alphabet, each of the 26 components is pleasingly distinct.

And if you begin alphabetically at Akihabara, you'll start small, too. The first station north of the main Tokyo station gives access to a jumble of electronics shops furiously selling devices at prices that would put Dixon's out of business (with the pound strong against the yen, the temptation to exceed your £145 duty-free allowance will be a problem). A bit beyond the excessively bright lights, you can pace down intriguing arcades where commerce simmers more sedately, and where the neon is softened by an elegant crimson arc indicating a Buddhist shrine.

Board another anticlockwise train to Ikebukuro, Tokyo's closest, trendiest approximation to Camden (though the north London district has fewer tall buildings and, in my experience, not a single "capsule hotel"). If you were looking for some sort of edge in the Japanese capital, you might find it here. Wander around Rio wearing a bemused expression, and you are

almost bound to be robbed; try the same in Tokyo, and you are certain to be helped. Should you know exactly where you are going, smiling young people on street corners will hand you small packets of paper tissues. This is not an ancient tradition of hospitality but a marketing technique; like most of the available surfaces in Tokyo, the wrappers carry advertising.

That the Japanese capital is like nowhere else on earth becomes confirmed if you stay on the Yamanote to Shinjuku, and track down the Number One Building of the Metropolitan Government Office – which has a free viewing-platform on the 45th floor.

In wilful defiance of the tectonic plates that creak beneath Tokyo's surface, Shinjuku is an exercise in elevation. Skyscrapers crowd the foreground, causing eddies in the sea of humanity that washes around their bases. Yet even at ground level you do not feel like a humble electron on a giant circuit board. You probably feel like a walk.

How about a stroll across Tokyo, at least the central core as defined by the Yamanote Line? The journey could take most of the afternoon and evening. You may pause to speculate at Octopus Army in Harajuku, a shop where wayward Japanese youths express their uniform desire for individuality. Then wander through the serene cemetery of Aoyama.

As the sun slides through the heat haze towards where the horizon once lay, you can stumble down into Roppongi, Tokyo's stab at Soho sleaze. The first two ingredients of the sex/drugs/rock'n'roll recipe for indulgence appear to have eluded the Japanese, giving Roppongi a wholesomeness that the note-perfect Beatles tribute bands can only reinforce. In Rio, the later it gets, the more the temperature and tension rise. Nightfall in the Japanese capital calms the city and eases the heat. A breeze drifts in from Tokyo Bay, the flickering fades and the skyline settles into a fixed constellation of electric light. May it never be switched off.

Getting there:
British Airways (0345 2222111) has just launched its best fare ever to Osaka or Tokyo, a World Offer of £299 return. This is valid for travel in June and must be booked by 10 June. All Nippon Airways has responded with some good-value fares to a range of Japanese destinations for £299 return.

Getting around: one of the best travel deals on the planet is a seven-day Japan Rail Pass, available for £136, including booking fee.

Getting information:
Japanese National Tourist Organisation: 5th Floor, 20 Saville Row, London W1X 1AE (0171-734 9638). And see The Independent's Japan report on 27 May.



gleamed. A kettle hung above a sunken hearth. There was no furniture, just some baskets containing coal, a couple of lamps and a stick sculpture in an alcove.

Outside, the rain fell. For the first time in my life I really listened to that rain, to the different sound it made as it fell on earth, on rock and on pines. Chioiri overlooked pine trees, and beyond them a mist spotted with occasional fairy lights – the lights of cars in the valley below. Just as I was trying to plug the lights in, a middle-aged man, who I later learnt was a neighbour, arrived on the scene. I asked in mime whether I could stay the night and he agreed. He repeated the name "Chioiri" reverently, as though it were a prayer. He brought out blankets from the back cupboard, switched on the lights, got a fire going and filled the kettle with water. Then he left.

I turned to the book that had led me here, *Lost Japan*, and delighted in reading about the house that I was now sitting in, wrapped up in blankets. I read about Alex Kerr's discovery there of a young girl's diary. She had lived in Chioiri with her grandparents during the Fifties and had found the poverty and gloom of the Iya valley too much. When she was 18 the diary stopped; she had run away to the city. On the door the grandparents pasted a paper charm in the hope that she might come back some day. The paper charm was still there, and I felt a tangible link with the history of the house; I had made the journey in reverse, escaping the harsh neon lights of the city to take refuge in Chioiri.

I woke up early next day, swept the floor, which was coated in floating ash from the fire, and began my trip down the mountain. I hauled a lift from a young worker who spoke some English. It turned out that he knew Alex Kerr, and indeed was mentioned frequently in his book as the boy who loved digging, and who had helped thatch Chioiri's roof. He was now a construction worker and had travelled all over the world, digging tunnels. He dropped me off at the bus stop and gave me a canned drink of hot coffee from the vending machine. It was still raining.

At 8am the bus appeared, with the same driver from the night before. I arrived back at Ikeda reeking of smoke, damp and wood, and the waitress in the station cafe crinkled her nose as I ordered my slap-up meal of coffee, two slices of toast and egg on beansprouts. I sat back, content. Now I could really say I'd seen Japan.

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First stop, the Eiffel tower ...
Paris can be child-friendly,
as long as you pick the right spots
Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Paris avec les enfants

Ah, romantic Paris ... but this time with children.

Don't panic, Margaret St John provides an essential guide, from fun trips to kids' cuisine

Many parents will be under merciless pressure this summer to stump up for a trip to Disneyland, Paris. But while their attention is firmly on the first half of this construction, the crafty mum or dad will slip in an element of the real-life theme park that is Paris.

that is Paris.

However, you must be well-organised and prepared for compromises. Here is a list of what our children love to do and what we are happy to trot along with - in good weather and bad - always trying to keep costs down.

If it's sunny, I suggest you go immediately to the Eiffel tower. The problem is the queues: the round-trip to the top can take three hours. Do you really want to go up, when pollution and smog obscure the view? No child I know has ever asked to go to the top a second time. It's tricky, but if you can manage to persuade your children to go for a boat ride on the Seine when they have had their photograph taken below the Eiffel tower, I think you will have engi-

neered the right decision (cost 20F to 57F, depending on how high you go).

For the boat trip, you can walk to the *bateaux-mouches* at the Pont d'Alma, passing by the flame above the underpass where the most famous car accident in his-

tory took place and glancing at the bizarre and touching messages left there for Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed. You can catch up on the latest conspiracy theories carved into the wall, as the City of Paris hasn't decided what to do with this makeshift shrine (originally a gift to the city from US citizens).

The boat trip is fun. It goes around the île de la Cité, so you get an excellent view of Notre Dame. At 40F for an adult and 20F per child, it is good value. There are no refreshments on board, so first pop into a bakery for pâtisseries and a supermarket for drinks.

After the boat trip, try walking up the avenue Marceau to the Arc de Triomphe

going up to the top, but at least the queues aren't bad (35F). Back along the Champs Elysées to the Tuilleries gardens, with its small playground and café. Go a little farther and you can take in the Pyramid at the Louvre. (The Louvre itself is a bit amb-

itious if you're on a tight schedule.) Now reward the children by taking them to the fabulous enclosed playground in the Luxembourg Gardens. It galls me to pay 13F per child and infuriates me that I have to pay 7F to watch them, but with my cup of delicious coffee from the food stall nearby, and the best loos in Paris for 2.50F per person, I enjoy my people-watching time there.

When I ask friends where they take their children for an evening meal in Paris, there is always an embarrassed admission that the place that works best is Hippopotamus. This chain does good food for children (menu, plus drink, balloon, colouring pencils and booklet, is 50F) and

chains worth trying are Chez Léon and Bistro Romain. Unfortunately, though, Paris is not Italy; only extremely well-behaved children are welcome in restaurants. It is only outside Paris that you see children out with the family enjoying

But what if it's raining? Paris seems to have its own particular type. There are no quick showers - it rains heavily for days. Last May and June were particularly bad, so be prepared.

I would suggest a first stop at the

Musée d'Orsay. Children are a positive advantage here, as a lady patrols the queue plucking out worthy families to be brought to the head of it. And in one of the most civilised gestures towards families anywhere, there is no entry charge for those under 18 (adults 40F).

And if you have seen *Bear: The Ultimate Disaster Movie*, you can play a game of finding the painting of Whistler's mother. A snack at the café behind the clock is worthwhile.

in the Marais (11 Rue St Paul, Métro St Paul, 45F per adult, 30F per child) but I found it disappointing. The Picasso museum, on the other hand, was a delight (rue Thorigny, Métro St Paul, adults 40F, children 30F). Visitors wander through a refurbished merchant's house seeing how the artist's style developed over the years.

The home of Victor Hugo (entrance 17F) in the stunning place des Vosges is also small enough not to be thought "boring". For older children, try the fascinating catacombs (under Métro Denfert-Rochereau) and the wax museum (Musée Grevin, blvd Montmartre, Métro Rue Montmartre).

Parisians love puppet shows, and throughout France the marionettes are popular.

flow and audience participation is encouraged. The Luxembourg Gardens theatre is covered, so you can escape the rain for about 50 minutes (23F per person, two shows every afternoon except school days).

There are lots of other activities (The Science Museum at La Villette and quaboulevard, a giant hi-tech swimming-pool complex) but frequently they are in the less picturesque parts of Paris, which I don't think are worth the detour if you're in the city for a short break. The boat trip can also be done in the rain because it's covered.

rostar (0345 303030) has a special carriage for families, with tables for picnics and naps. Baby-changing facilities are excellent. Take the lift at Waterloo; it's awkward on the escalators with children and buggies. In Paris, helpful men help you on to the train. At Waterloo there is a £5 charge for this. Buy a net of Métro tickets at Waterloo, queues long in Paris.

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Beam down

The best availability at low fares is on Eurostar (0345 303030) from London Waterloo via Lille or Paris to Marseilles St-Charles station for £119 return. British Airways (0345 303030) flies three times daily from Gatwick to Marseilles, with a lowest return fare of £227.20 including tax. Flights arrive at the Marseilles Marignac airport west of the city, connected by bus (45F) every 20 minutes to the station.

Get your bearings

Marseilles is spread out and surprisingly hilly. Yet much of what you will want to see can be visited on foot, and there are also a métro system (two lines), a tramway and a decent bus network. South of the station stretch some 37km of seafront, with the Vieux Port at the heart, the modern docks to the west and the Corniche to the east.

The wide La Canabière cuts north-south through the centre of town. Although now full of discount stores and fast-food outlets, it was once the Champs-Elysées of the south, and a few grand remnants include the Bourse, which contains a maritime museum.

Check in

The best option is one of several hotels on the Vieux Port. The comfortable Ionic Hôtel (00 33 4 91 55 67 46) at 43 quai des Belges (double rooms 410F-590F) and the slightly simpler Hôtel Alizé (00 33 4 91 33 66 97) at 35 quai des Belges (rooms 295F-355F) are both agreeable. Make sure to ask for a room with a view of the port if you want an eye on local life. The modern Hôtel Sofitel (00 33 4 91 15 59 00), out by the fortress at 36 boulevard Charles Livon, is more luxurious and spacious, at 660F-960F a night, but less convenient.

Architecture buffs will want to stay somewhere rather different: the hotel located among the flats inside Le Corbusier's influential Unité d'Habitation (00 33 4 91 16 78 00), built in 1952 in the eastern suburbs, at 280 boulevard Michelet. Its sculptural roof can be seen from afar; up close it is marked by the primary colours on the balconies and the giant V-shaped concrete pilotis. Rooms cost 190F-285F a night, or you can simply eat lunch in the restaurant.

A hike

Begin a stroll around Old Marseilles with the Vieux Port. This is now a yachting marina but is still the core of the city, with its fortresses enclosing either end and quays lined with cafés, ships' chandlers and restaurants.

The Stade Vélodrome, home to Marseilles' adored football team Olympique Marseille (and the England vs Tunisia game) may be on the hills to the north east, but supporters still parade round here after matches and there's even now an OM Café on the quay.

You can nip across the harbour in a little ferry shuttle (3F), in pretty much the same time it takes to walk. Take a look at the decorative 17th-century Mairie (town hall) on the quai du Port. Beyond here the western side of the port was bombed in the war, but in the basement of one of the new buildings, opened as the Roman Docks Museum (place Vivaux, open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm), you can look down on the excavations of a Roman warehouse.

For an interesting insight into today's Marseilles, explore the narrow streets north of the broad Cours Belsunce. Here you might think yourself in a north African city, with its Arab grocers, cafés where an all-male clientele watches TV, and decrepit-looking hotels.

Then climb up between the rue de la République and the quai du Port to explore the historic quartier du Panier. Although the houses are beginning to be restored, this area of melting-pot Marseilles, where French, Moroccans and Africans live side by side, can still feel slightly dodgy – with the occasional burnt-out car hidden down an alley.

At the top is the beautiful Centre de la Vieille-Charité (2 rue de la Vieille-Charité), now a collection of museums and well worth visiting for its architecture alone. A three-storey arcade surrounds



Reflections of Marseilles: the city is a mix of ancient and modern, eyesores and beauties



Photographs: Stéphane Compain/Sygma

a central courtyard with strikingly austere oval domed chapel in the centre, built 1671-1741 and the only major surviving work of Pierre Puget, court architect to Louis XIV.

Between the Vieille-Charité and the modern docks is Marseilles' cathedral, actually two cathedrals side by side, one (the Vieille-Major) a fortified medieval basilica, its replacement (the Nouvelle-Major) a garish neoclassical extravaganza, dating from the late 19th century when the port prospered after the opening of the Suez Canal.

Lunch on the run
Stop for a quick salad or a quiche at l'Art et des Thés (00 33 4 91 14 58 71), the café within the Vieille-Charité complex (open noon-6pm). The room is very simple, but the setting is beautiful and the outdoor tables are perfect for relaxing.

Cultural afternoon
Marseilles has an astonishing number of museums, and you're not going to get round all of them. Make a start with the Centre de la Vieille-Charité, home to two important museums: the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology, noted for its Greek and Roman artefacts and for its Egyptian department, and the Museum of African, Oceanic and American-Indian Arts, a collection of sculpture and masks, skulls and Mexican popular art (both open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm).

On the other side of the Vieux Port, visit the Musée Cantini (19 rue Grignan, open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm). The pretty, late-18th-century mansion is the perfect setting for a small but high-quality collection of modern art including Dufy, Ernst, Léger and Matisse.

Liquid culture
The café beckons, and the local *apéro* is pastis. The blend of star anise and herbs is an acquired taste, but one that's easier to acquire on a terrace in Marseilles (perhaps the fashionable New York or Bar de la Marine on the Vieux Port) than in a Paris café or a London pub. Anyway, the best bit is watching the liquid turn from gold to cloudy yellow when you add water.

Fisherman's dinner
If there's one dish inextricably associated with Marseilles, it is bouillabaisse. Much more than just a fish soup, this is a full meal, usually served first as a soup with garlic, croissants and rouille, followed by the assorted fish and shellfish (a mixture of at least five varieties that has to include *nuscaisse* – scorpion fish) and saffron-tinted potatoes, preferably complemented by the white wine of neighbouring Cassis.

Ask any Marseillais(e) and they'll tell you that you can't get a real bouillabaisse anywhere else. They'll also tell you it should be ordered at least 24 hours in advance – and will probably inform you that the one you've just eaten wasn't the real thing. Splurge out at the Miramar (00 33 4 91 91 10 40), a chic Fifties brasserie at 12 quai du Port, which has a much better reputation than the tourist restaurants that line rue Thiers behind the quai de Rive Neuve.

Sunday morning: go to church
Work up an appetite with a steep climb up the steps (the lazy can take the bus up and walk down) to the Eglise Notre Dame de la Garde. Perched on the top of a hill, the wonderfully ugly, stripy marble church, built under the Second Empire, is visible from most of the city – with a gigantic gilded statue of the Virgin on the roof and an interior full of *ex-voto* plaques of thanks from those she has miraculously saved.

On the way down, visit the much more historic Abbaye St-Victor, behind a fortified facade. Again, this is two churches on top of each other, with the 11th-to-13th-century church sitting over a labyrinth of crypts housing carved sarcophagi from the third and fourth centuries.

Mediterranean lunch
It's not easy to find a restaurant open for Sunday lunch, but a popular and good-value local spot is Chez Soi (00 33 4 91 54 25 41) at 5 rue Papère, just off La Canebière in a former dairy, the place for bistro favourites such as leg of lamb and crème caramel.

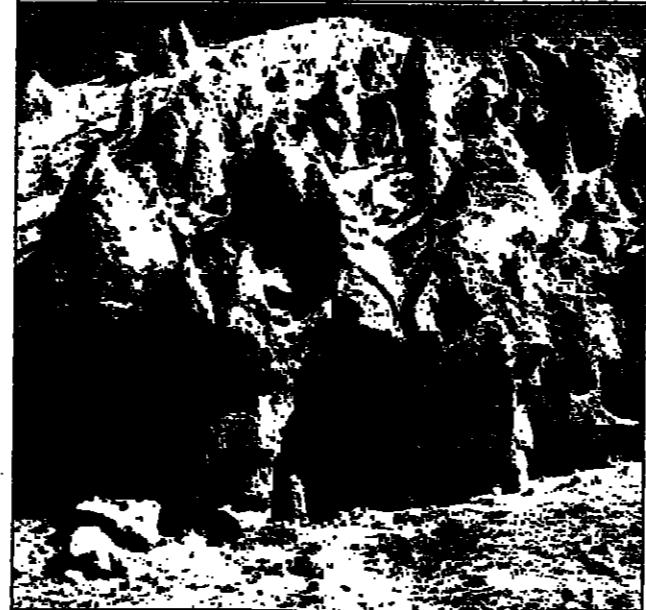
Icing on the cake
Finish your visit with a whiff of sea air and a panoramic view of Marseilles in a boat trip from the harbour. Two quickie visits leave from the quai des Belges: the île d'If with the 16th-century fortress prison that inspired Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* and, just beyond, the îles de Fronde, which, apart from a small marina and a few holiday flats and cafés by the jetty, are mainly windswept rock dotted with clumps of rosemary and thyme – a fragrant reminder that you're in the Med.

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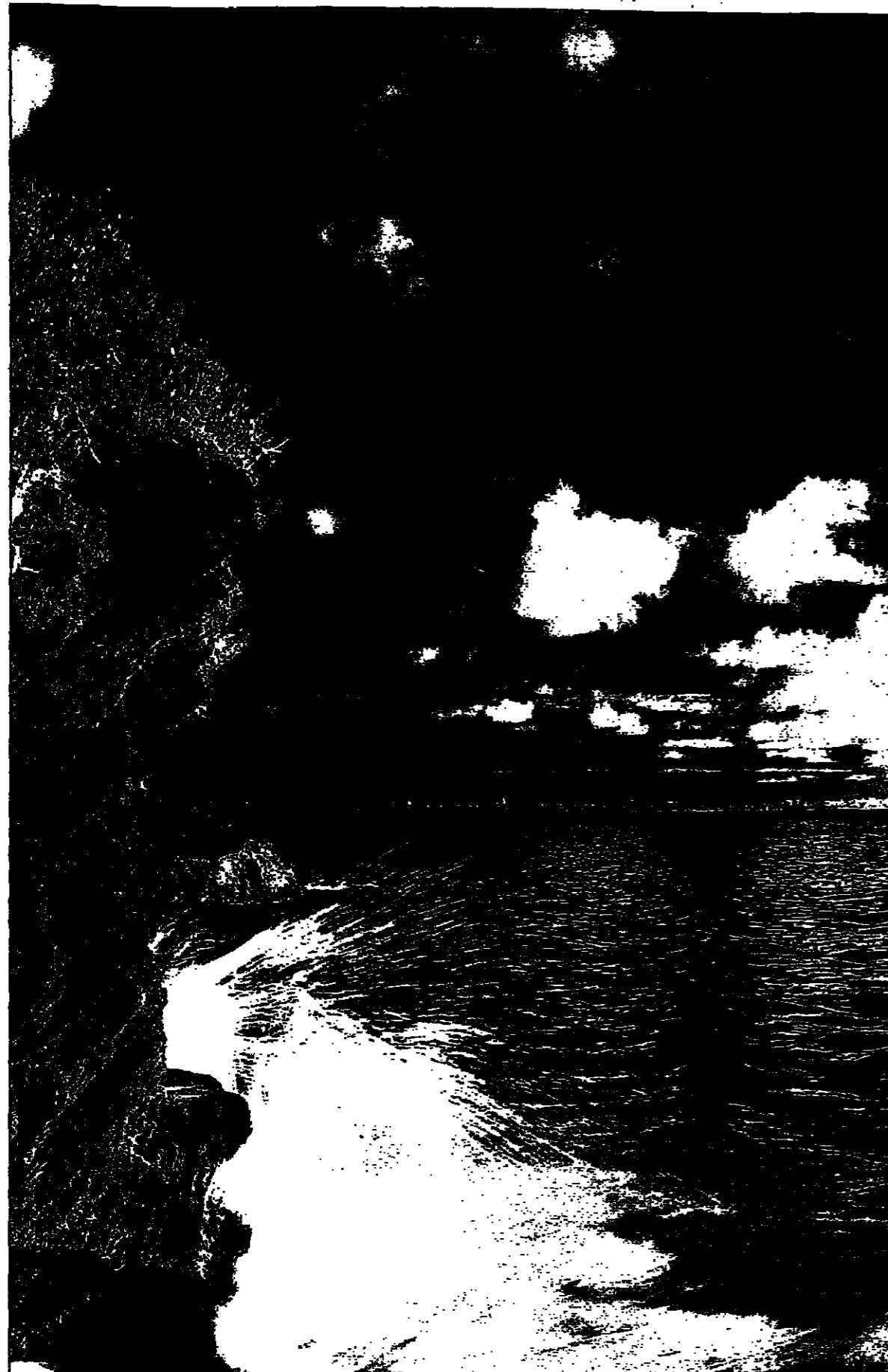
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Bermuda: with 60,000 people on 21 square miles, the sea substitutes countryside

Photograph: Tony Stone Images

Cornwall drifts to the mid-Atlantic

West country meets Switzerland in the middle of an ocean? Hamish McRae explores Bermuda

Imagine an island surrounded by coral reefs, with about the highest standard of living in the world, with no income tax or corporation tax, and an hour-and-a-half's flying time to three of the world's most sophisticated cities. Any idea? A hint: it is a British colony. Still not there? All right, it is Bermuda.

Bermuda is not a common destination for Britons, and virtually all the half-million tourists it receives each year are Americans. We tend to think of it, if we think of it at all, as a Caribbean island, whereas it is in fact 1,000 miles north of the Caribbean, stuck out on its own in the middle of the Atlantic. That means that its climate is much wetter and cooler than that of the West Indies, and that it is therefore principally a summer holiday destination rather than a winter one. Yes, you can lie on a beach in winter, but you will have to wait for a dry and not too windy day. Yes, you can snorkel the reefs, but in winter you would probably want to wear a wetsuit.

So why go? It is easy to see why Americans go. It is quick and relatively cheap to fly there from any of the big east coast cities: New York, Boston and Washington. It is also, to Americans, exotic. It feels different. It is tiny - 25 miles long - and for most of its length it is just a few hundred yards wide. There are narrow little roads with cars driving on the left, neatly cropped hedges, pastel-painted cottages - half-close your eyes, and it could be Cornwall. Visitors are not allowed to rent cars, so they have the novel experience of riding around on scooters or taking buses. It's not at all like life in the US.

The island's colonial status is also an attraction. Unlike virtually all the other former colonies it seems happy with this status, having voted nearly three to one to remain so in 1995. In fact it is the only colony of any size we have left, now that Hong Kong has gone, with 60,000 of Britain's remaining 100,000 or so colonial subjects living there. It also has the second oldest British settlement in the western hemisphere, a town called St George, founded in 1612, a few years after Jamestown in Virginia. Unlike Jamestown, which has been reconstructed as a museum, St George has been in continuous occupation, and the oldest buildings date back to the 17th and early 18th centuries.

So Americans get a glimpse both of a foreign culture and of their own history. But they

can use their own dollars, which are legal tender and pegged one-to-one with Bermudan dollars, speak their own language and enjoy all the amenities of a country with the standard of living of Switzerland. Bliss.

tionally built boat, with an enormous mast, a massive sail area and a crew of six or seven to try to keep the thing upright. If you need to lighten the boat during a race, apparently you dump a couple of the crew overboard.

Our own exploits were more modest: a rented motorboat to spin out to a wreck, HMS *Vixen*, the navy's first twin screw warship, where my intrepid spouse and daughter snorkelled sans wetsuits. Bermuda has a brilliant line in wrecks. That was how the British arrived, when the *Sea Venture*, under Sir George Somers, was wrecked in 1609 en route for Virginia. Bermuda has accumulated about 300 wrecks, ranging from Spanish galleons to *The Constellation*, made famous by Peter Beachley's book *The Deep*. For anyone interested in snorkelling or diving, Bermuda is a starred alpha location, because aside from its wrecks it also has particularly interesting coral — the most northerly

duties. There are also taxes on visitors, with even cruise visitors who sleep in their ships having to pay a nightly tax. Add in the fact that wages are high and you end up paying London prices, plus a bit. The quality of the service is excellent, but cheap Bermuda is not.

However, Britons and Americans alike get two incomparable attractions: the sea and the people. The sea substitutes for countryside. The Bermuda sailing races are legendary, the dinghy races in particular: a little 14ft tradi-

THE KNEES HAVE IT

Bermuda Shorts are the main (well – the only) contribution of the island to the fashion industry. They were developed from British tropical military wear and are used for formal occasions as well as informal. The classic business attire consists of a blue, blazer-style jacket, a white shirt with a tie, tailored shorts ending between three and four inches above the knee, knee-length socks and black formal shoes. The shorts can be in any colour except that of the jacket; and the socks must tone with either the jacket or the shorts. Bermuda shorts are completely acceptable at a business meeting. Go to a convention, and never in your life will you see so many male knees.

The only airline with direct flights to Bermuda from Britain is British Airways (0345 222111). The lowest fare for travel between June and September is £738 return. Bermuda Tourism: 1 Battersea Church Road, London SW11 3LY (0171-771 7001).

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A bird in the hand

... will bite viciously in Nauru. But the locals bite back. It's part of the culture of this South Pacific island, as Cleo Paskal finds out

The Republic of Nauru is an eight-square-mile pile of bird droppings and coral in the South Pacific. Or, more accurately, it used to be a pile of bird droppings and coral, back in the good old days. Now it's mostly the craters and coral pinnacles left over after the Naurans spent much of the century digging up the guano, renaming it "phosphate" and selling it off to Australians and New Zealanders as fertiliser: a trade that, for a while, made Nauru one of the richest spots on earth.

Now that the phosphate is almost gone, Nauru is slowly blinking out from the consumer haze induced by the huge influx of cash. Television sets, microwaves and VCRs bought in the island's economic heyday lie unprepared and unmended. The void left by the disappearance of Stallone videos is being filled by an inter-

est in traditional Nauruan culture. So far so good, but what is traditional Nauruan culture? Making a fortune of 80ft-deep pits of prehistoric manure tends to leave you open to ridicule. There are about 6,800 Naurans, and not one of them wants to talk to the press. But I wanted to bond. To get to know their hopes and dreams. To go cultural.

A normally reliable unofficial tourist information office is the local pub. Again, the Naurans don't make it easy. After much rowdiness, including countless alcohol-induced traffic accidents on the country's only road, women's and church groups got the government to shut down all the night clubs. Now the only places to drink are the island's one hotel and the staff club at the Nauru Phosphate Company.

Not currently being on the staff

of Nauru Phosphate, I headed over to the Menen Hotel. The bar area was mostly full of government officials, the same guys who had shut down all the other pubs. I dived into the alcoholic serum and within minutes was talking to a heavy-set, middle-aged politico.

It was he who told me about the Legendary Nauruan Noddy Bird Hunt. It is something Naurans do without cameras, crowds or drinks trays. Something private, nearly sacred. And this guy knew someone who knew someone who would be willing to take me along for the hunt. I was in.

The next night, around dusk, a young Nauran called Maxwell, his amiable friend Roy and Roy's smiley wife Em came to pick me up in a nearly dead Land Rover. There were two over-sized butterfly nets

sticking out at the back, and all the dials on the dash read zero.

Naurans take their birds very seriously – with excellent reason. The national bird, the frigate, is such a nasty character that it doesn't even fish itself; it just frightens other birds into disgorging their catch.

We clunked our way up into the interior, using mining paths, driving among 60ft bleached white coral pinnacles, the tombstones of the phosphate mines. We drove as far as we could, then took the nets out and set up sentries among the pinnacles, waiting for the Noddies to return from their day's fishing.

Roy took a net and crouched low on a small rise, immobile and silent. Maxwell sat in a small depression at Roy's feet. Em sat about 10ft away, within net-reach of Roy.

Once upon a time, master Noddy

callers would summon the birds to their fate, now the Naurans use digitally remastered Noddy call recordings.

Roy turned on his tape and waited for the birds to swoop. Soon a small, bat-like form dive-bombed the tape deck. Roy bagged it in his net, then passed it to Em. At first, I was worried for her. The fist-sized Noddy was viciously trying to tear apart the hand she was holding it in.

"Em," I said, "aren't you scared it'll bite you?"

"Yeah," Em said: "they bite, but I'll bite harder, they'll die".

Her jaw tightened round the bird, mine dropped. And then she began plucking feverishly. I've fished and hunted and skinned rabbits. Hey, I'm Canadian, we learn that in primary school. But I've never seen an animal killed quite like that before. It was horrible.

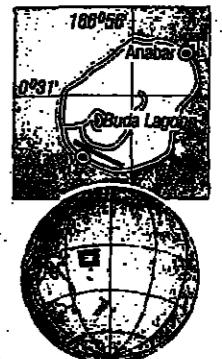
Here and Nauru

The island is not easy to reach. Bridge The World (0171-911 0900) recommends a return to Brisbane on Malaysia Airlines for £2480, followed by a return on Air Nauru for £223 – £223 all told. Air Nauru also flies to Sydney, Melbourne, Fiji and Manila. There is only one Western standard hotel, the Menen (00 674-444 33 00). Rooms range from £825 (about £40) for a basic single to £4700 (£330) for a grand suite.

The Menen Hotel bar is the place to socialise (and enjoy a Noddy hunt invite) on the island. If you prefer to hunt fish rather than birds, they can arrange everything from big game fishing to island

tours. A good time to visit is around 21 July, the anniversary of the Nauru Phosphate Company, when you can partake of a range of more exotic examples of traditional Nauruan culture, like superb singing and dancing.

Nauru sunset: the island grew rich on bird droppings and is now digging up its cultural roots
Photograph: Paul van Riel/RHPL

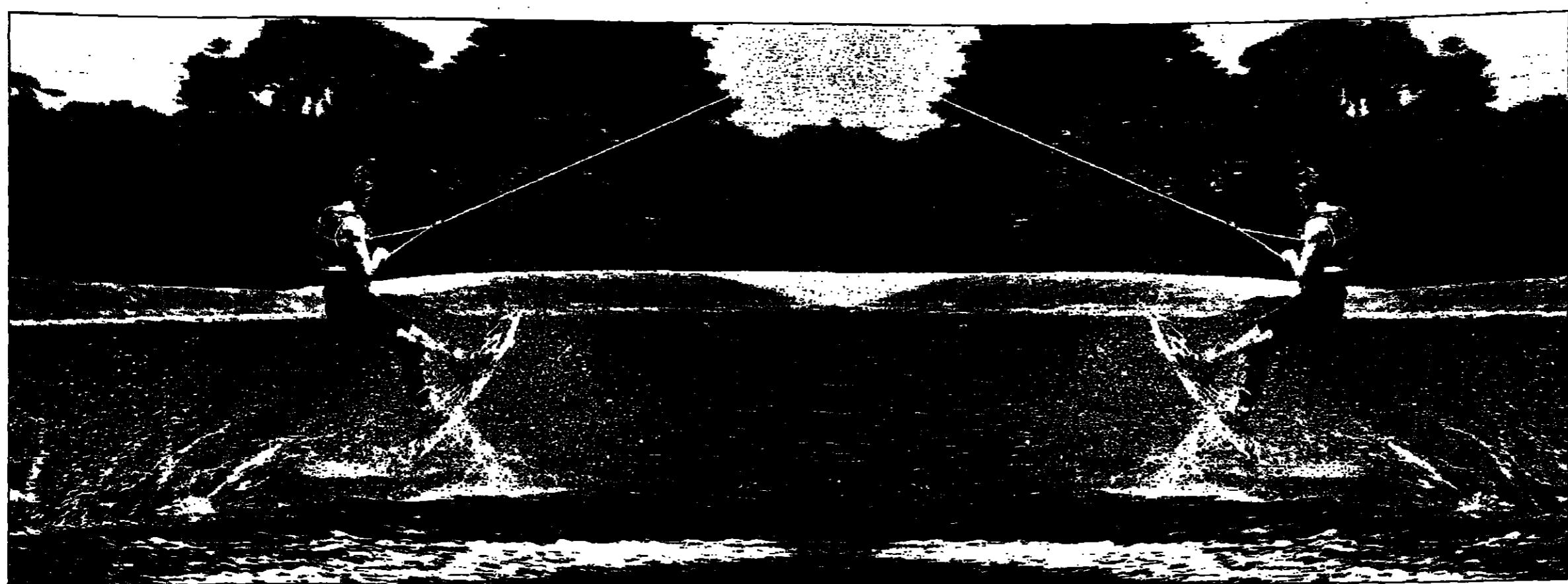


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On the up:
wake-boarding
may be easy once
you're up – but
starting is a
challenge
Photographs:
Penny Kendall

Just stand sideways and jump

Kneeling on an oversized swimming-float towed by a cable to hurtle round a lake at 20mph, you're on the way to wake-boarding, the hippest thing you can do this summer – with or without clothes on. But there'll be lots of falling off and lungfuls of lake water before you can do tricks on a real board. And though performing is what it's all about, for now you just concentrate on staying upright.

Wake-boarding is to waterskiers what snowboarding is to snow skiers: the new kid on the block, standing sideways just to be different and, as it happens, to do all kinds of amazing stunts. It is irritatingly popular and can attract the kind of person who wears baggy shorts over a wetsuit. But rather than take over traditional water-skiing territory, it comes hand-in-hand with an alternative way to ski on water: the cable tow. This drag-lift-round-a-lake is the new, cost-effective way to go.

With a cable tow, not only can lots of people ski together on a small stretch of water; it has also changed the way you ride. There's no boat, so there's no wake to play on, but the upward puff of the overhead

It's like high-performance waterskiing but without the boat. Eric Kendall tries to stay upright on a wake-board

cable that tows you makes life easier and improves jumping potential for experts. If it sounds uncomfortable, that's because it is, but wait until you've done a couple of laps.

When the pull comes, it takes you by surprise, however ready you think you are. If your weight's not bang on, you instantly leave the kneeboard, flying through the air and enjoying the brisk acceleration and sensation of wingless flight – but aware that it will be a short ride and that the water will be cold.

As you learn the basics on a kneeboard, there are a few things to get used to: launching and staying on in that order. The starting procedure feels like a cross between ritual humiliation and execution. With the board on a launch-pad of wet plastic bristles, you adopt the kneeling Superman position, having fastened a broad Velcro strap across your knees. The slack tow line is out in front of you, with the handle clenched in your fists; your knuckles should have drained to white at this point. Despite the impression that you'll be pulled flat on your face, it's more likely that you'll go over back-

wards, so keeping this weight-forward position, you wait for your turn to come. If it sounds uncomfortable, that's because it is, but wait until you've done a couple of laps.

When the pull comes, it takes you by surprise, however ready you think you are. If your weight's not bang on, you instantly leave the kneeboard, flying through the air and enjoying the brisk acceleration and sensation of wingless flight – but aware that it will be a short ride and that the water will be cold.

Get it together the next time, and you wobble into the first straight, gaining confidence, even trying to slalom while aiming in the general direction of the two white buoys that indicate the first turn.

You don't really need to do anything to turn – you go where it tows you, which makes it sound easy. A gentle turn would be a cinch, but the sharper they come, the more you decelerate into them, allowing the rope to go slack, which can only mean

you're in for a mini-repeat of the start, only somehow worse.

First time around the final, most aggressive corner, before you've learnt to absorb the pull and find the best line, you're bound to lose it, resulting in a high-speed ejection, landing smacked on your face. But the most impressive bit is the yank itself; as I bobbed around afterwards in my lifejacket I was convinced I'd see my arms disappearing across the lake, still attached to the ski-line.

The next step is to try to stand, either on two skis or straightforward on a wake-board, which opens up the scope for going backwards and sideways, doing somersaults, jumps, and whatever takes your fancy. It's easy once you're up, I'm assured, but starting is a challenge. The fact that everyone else – eight-year-olds included – leaps from the jetty in a flamboyant, extravagant version of the humble launch you're struggling with is more a put-down than an inspiration. You can't expect to run before you can walk, they remind you. Never mind all that; a crawl would be nice, just to be going on with.

LEARNING THE ROPES

Princes Club, Middlesex (01784 256153) is within 30 minutes of London by train and has the lot: four ski lakes and an 800-metre cable tow that can take eight skiers at once. Slalom skiing is still popular, but wake-boards are the thing, with unlimited scope for tricks and stunts or just an easy ride. All

equipment – wetsuit, lifejacket, kneeboard, skis and wake-board – can be hired; a two-hour session costs £15 plus £1 each for wetsuit and lifejacket hire.

Cable tows are the future of the sport, putting more people on the water for less money. The Princes Club school scheme, sponsored by LH Supplies and SportsMatch (a government body) has put waterskiing and wake-boarding on to the curriculum for the first time and spawned the British junior wake-board champion and European Tour record holder, 11-year-old Ben Hinch. Other stars, such as Stuart Marston, British national champion, can be seen in action from the excellent lakeside club facilities.

There are four other cable tows around England: Thorpe Park (01932 561717), Aqua Active Cable Ski, Rother Valley, Sheffield (0142 251 1777), Aquas/Skegness (01754 761025), and the National Training Centre, Nottingham (0115 981 816). Details are also available from the British Water-Ski Federation (0171 833 2855). Within easy reach of the cross-channel ferry is Noeux les Mines, near Arras in northern France (Pas de Calais tourist board, 0033 2633 3259), which has a lake with a cable tow to complement the plastic ski slope that has been built on one of its slag heaps.

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The Cotswold coup

Mellow stone walls, teashops, postcard-pretty houses – that's Burford. And it's also the birthplace of Britain's first socialist movement, celebrated today, writes Rob Stepney

Let it only be whispered in the Cotswold cream teashops of Burford High Street, but this prosperous town that now lies so peacefully in the valley of the Windrush was once the centre of a bloody insurrection that might have changed the history of England.

The revolt of dissident "Leveller" troops from Oliver Cromwell's victorious army aimed to push the government into reforms that would have transformed post-Civil War society. The radical democrat rebellion in fact ended in imprisonment and death. But the places associated with the events of three-and-a-half centuries ago add unexpected interest to this mellow, wisteria-walled town. They also provide the focus for an unusual annual celebration by groups who feel the Levellers' impetus towards radical change has not yet been exhausted.

It was on a May evening in 1649. The scene by the church was much as today (except for the distant dazzle of the rape fields). Overlooked by the dogtoothed Norman tower and massive spire, the watermeadows across the mill stream were probably bright with buttercups and cow parsley. Then there came the sound of men on horses, almost a thousand of them, as Burford was overwhelmed by mutinous troops.

For years, the people of the town had experienced the ebb and flow of Royalist and Parliamentarian forces, covering from occasional firefights that left dead in the streets, but more typically enduring the casual oppressions of what seemed like an occupying force, from whichever side it came. That said, the Civil War was over, King Charles already dead. And not many Burford inhabitants would have understood why soldiers were once again in their streets.

Arrears of pay had eroded loyalty. But what led these Cromwellian troopers to outright mutiny was an ideal of democracy that was more than a century ahead of its time, and would not be countenanced by those the Civil War brought to power. Leveller beliefs eventually found lasting expression in the declarations that accompanied the American Revolution. But for the rank and file rebels that spring night, the future held only imprisonment and, for three of their leaders, the firing squad.

Thinking they were safe from pursuit in Burford, the mutineers posted few guards. Troops loyal to Cromwell surprised them



Levellers' last stand: Burford, left; 'socialist' celebrations, above

Main photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

BURFORD BEAUTIES

Apart from Levellers' Day, the attractions of this picture-postcard town include the high street, the little Tolesey Museum (open Mon-Thurs, 2pm-5pm; Fri, Sat and Sun, 11am-5pm; adults 50p, children 10p) which gives a lively insight into local history, and Sheep Street with its fine 15th- and 16th-century houses built with money from the wool trade. However, in summer it is essential to get to Burford early in the day, before the crowds descend.

Those with children in tow could then escape the throng and make for the Cotswold Wildlife Safari Park (open daily, 10am-5pm; adults £5.50, children 3-15, £3.50) just south of Burford. Slightly further afield, near Witney, is the wonderful Victorian farm and manor house, Cogges Manor Farm (Tues-Fri, 10.30am-4.30pm, Sat and Sun, 12pm-4.30pm; adults £3.25, children 3-16 £1.75).

during the night. There was skirmishing, and one attacker was killed by rebels defending the Crown high-street pharmacy. But those who did not escape in the darkness soon surrendered.

On the lead-lined foot of Burford church is an inscription, worn but legible. It reads "Anthony Sedley, 1649, Prism", with the "n" reversed, painstakingly etched with the tip of a knife during three days of incarceration. Sedley survived. But on 17 May three leaders of the Levellers were executed by Cromwell's muskets. The likely place was against the high part of the churchyard wall, though the holes notionally made by musket balls should not be trusted.

Today, wreaths will be laid at the memorial on the church, and "The Red Flag" will be sung. This is only a part of the day's commemoration, organised by the Lev-

ellers' Day Committee of the Oxford Workers' Educational Association. There will also be speeches in the old church hall, a procession down the high street, Morris dancing, family picnics, and the possibility of adjournment to a good pub, of which there are several. But the question remains: why "The Red Flag"? Twenty-five years ago, after centuries of neglect, the memory of the Levellers was renewed by Oxford socialists. Tony Benn is unofficial patron of Levellers' Day, and Ken Livingstone has been a speaker at the annual event.

Such celebration has not always found favour with some sections of the Burford community. There was a time in the Eighties when a rival booking of the church hall was planned to frustrate the organisers of Levellers' Day, and when the singing of

"The Red Flag" was countered by a rendering of "Rule, Britannia". Happily, the animosity of those days has disappeared. "Relations with Burford town council are now friendly. The only issue is where we should park," says David Lewis, who has for many years helped organise Levellers' Day. "The police, too, are understanding. They treat the brief interruption to traffic caused by our high-street parade as a slow-moving vehicle.

"In remembering people in the past who fought and suffered for their beliefs, we can provide others with inspiration," he continues. "The message is that you're not alone."

But the question of who should really inherit the spirit of the Levellers is still a live local issue. The Burford historian Raymond Moody argues that the executed soldiers Corlett Thompson, Corporal

Perkins and Private Church would turn in their unmarked graves at those who come to lay their wreaths.

"With the Levellers' emphasis on the sanctity of private property and resistance to state interference, I can't understand why they should have become a left-wing icon," he says. "Simply because they were on the side of the underdog did not mean that they were the forerunners of socialism." It was their faith in God and not the class struggle that gave these men the courage to bare their chests to the firing party that May morning, he argues.

What did the mutinous rebel soldiers who marched on Burford in fact demand? The Levellers' "Agreement of the Free People of England", smuggled out of prison earlier that month, called for the right to vote for all men who worked independently

for a living, free trade; the abolition of the House of Lords; elected judges; and secure title to land for small farmers. Despite the "Leveller" name coined by their political enemies, there was no hint in their programme of the common ownership of property or means of production.

Raymond Moody continues: "The Levellers' beliefs also sprang from the view that the problems of England derived from pernicious laws imposed on the people by foreigners – the 'Norman Yoke' – and it is an irony that Levellers' Day this year will be addressed by someone from the European Parliament."

Moody also finds it intriguing that men whose political ideals were so firmly linked with a non-conformist Christian conscience should be celebrated by a movement with an essentially atheist ideology.

A piece of Powys that passeth all understanding

The Elan valley, a hidden gem of Wales, offers its few visitors rare treats of scenery and wildlife. By Daniel Butler

Overcrowding in some of our most beautiful landscapes is reaching crisis point. As the temperatures rise, so columns of townsfolk wind into Dartmoor, the Peaks and the Dales, all intent on experiencing "unsophisticated wilderness". The irony, of course, is that in summer the "wastes" that thrilled Boswell, Wordsworth and Hardy are likely to be gridlocked.

For all that, though, there are still hidden gems, and the Elan valley is one of them. Extend a straight line from London through Oxford, Cheltenham and Hereford, and shortly before reaching Aberystwyth you find yourself in the joyful emptiness of eastern Powys.

Given the valley's beauty and its comparative proximity to well populated areas (it is

only two hours from Birmingham or Bristol), it may be surprising that the area is so under-visited. It certainly wasn't always so. Shelley was among the first visitors: he fled here to his uncle's house after being sent down from Oxford, and was so taken with the wild beauty that he tried to set up a writers' commune nearby. The Victorians agreed with him, founding a string of towns along the eastern edge of the mountains that form the backbone of Wales (Llanwrtyd, Llangammarch, Builth and Llandrindod all boast the epithet "Wells"). Yet the area's popularity has waned, and left it with one of the lowest per capita incomes in Britain.

For the handful of visitors who do stumble across it, the rewards are significant. The backdrop of the Cambrian mountains are formed from some of the oldest rocks in Britain and come with a desolate beauty of their own, different from that of the better known crags of north Wales and the Lake District.

A century ago the entire catchment of the valley was bought by the Corporation of Birmingham, anxious for a reliable source of drinking water. In an ambitious engineering project, four huge dams and a 73-mile pipe were built to supply a mushrooming Midlands population. By modern standards these massive stone edifices are beautiful, if austere, and heavy rain makes them truly spectacular, cloaking them white with millions of gallons of cascading water. Thanks to this and deserted mountain roads, the area features heavily in car and mobile phone advertisements (not to

mention the recent TV series *Mortimer's Law*).

In contrast to other reservoir projects, the dams have been an environmental godsend. In the cause of water purity, the authorities have always kept a tight leash on human activity, beginning by evicting some 400 tenants

face restrictions on stocking and chemical use, but when it comes to visitors the picture is ambiguous. On the one hand there is an excellent visitor centre and an effective "freedom to roam" policy; but water sports, camping and off-road driving are banned. In addition, the Trust seems

drawn by red kites, peregrines, redstarts and golden plovers; others hope for a glimpse of polecats, otters and badgers – and the rare upland orchids found in the unimproved hay meadows. Another great attraction is the "friendly" nature of the hills, quite unlike the precipitous peaks of Scotland and the Lakes. And the views from the tops are still breathtaking: on a clear day the panorama stretches from the Black Mountains to Snowdonia.

Outdoor activities are not confined to hikers – this is one of the few hilly areas in the country where you can plan a relatively gentle cycle tour through spectacular scenery. And if even this seems too energetic, flyfishing for the monster brown trout that lurk in the lakes is

cheap and easily arranged. Finally, it's worth noting that the area is pervaded by a genuinely friendly atmosphere. Be prepared for gentle gossip with the newsagent and pub locals, all curious as to how on earth you heard about the place.

Getting there: by public transport, the Elan Valley is difficult to reach. The railway station at Llandrindod Wells, on the Heart of Wales line, is about 12 miles east. There are sporadic buses.

Being there: the Elan Valley Hotel (run by former actors, 01597 810448) is two miles south west of Rhayader. B&B costs £24-£30 per person. Bikes, ponies and fishing can be arranged from here. Kitewatchers Wildlife Breaks (01597 811169) has a variety of guided tours.

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Where there's muck ...

... there's a beak. Malcolm Smith reports from the nation's sewage farms, where all kinds of birds are circling and salivating

What do these four have in common: Nottingham, Cambridge, Perry Oaks and Wisbech? Not the sort of question for a prime-time TV quiz show, perhaps. Not even a question that will elicit a correct answer from more than a tiny proportion of the million-plus members of the RSPB. But ask a keen birdwatcher of a certain age what these places have in common, and he or she won't hesitate. Sewage works, of course.

Muck is magic for birds. Especially this sort of muck. Many of today's senior ornithologists cut their teeth as birdwatchers - and developed their identification skills - surrounded by percolating filters, humus tanks, settling lagoons and the other paraphernalia that convert the end products of human bodily functions into (almost) pure water. Wagtails making the most of the clouds of tiny black sewage flies; flocks of finches devouring piles of tomato and other pass-through-your-gut seeds; snipe and monotonously churring grasshopper warblers in the damp, lagoon-side vegetation; even occasional rarities such as a lesser yellowlegs visiting from North America, attracted, perhaps, by the all-organic diet.

But, if old birdwatching hands used to check their Ordnance Survey maps for the telltale "wks" symbol (usually denoting a sewage works), most of today's twitchers gain their spurs by tearing about the country having been alerted to the latest rarity on their mobile phones. Not that technology can be blamed exclusively for the demise of the sewage farm birdwatchers' logbooks.

"Sewage farms aren't as popular with young birdwatchers because these have switched from being wetland habitats to something more like industrial plants," comments David Glue, of the British Trust for Ornithology. Glue, with Dennis Bodenham and Frances Bowman, two BTO members, have been visiting Aylesbury works and studying its birds for the last 27 years.

How important sewage farms were for birdwatchers learning their trade, from the

SEWAGE STAKE-OUT

The best bits of a sewage works for birds (based on Aylesbury) in descending order of merit. Information from a 27-year study by Glue, Bodenham and Bowman.

Sprinklers and percolating filters: year-round water and food for thousands of starlings and pied wagtails; at other times for yellow wagtails, gulls and meadow pipits.

Wet grassland irrigation areas: nesting spots for reed buntings, warblers, ducks; even snipe and water rails.

Storm and humus tanks: good for wagtails and, at times of shallow water, for wading birds, chiffchaffs, rock pipits and even rare black redstarts.

Lagoons: breeding spots for little grebes, mallard and moorhen; occasionally tufted ducks and kingfishers.

Hedges and scrub: nesting places for blackbirds, wrens, warblers and others.

Buildings and machinery: nesting for house sparrows, wagtails, sometimes even kestrels and little owls.

Lawns: feeding for wagtails, green woodpeckers and thrushes.

Rubbish heaps: vegetable wastes and seeds attract pheasants, stock doves, magpies and flocks of finches.

Twenty years up until the Sixties, can be gauged from the autobiography of one of the founding fathers of British ornithology. In *Seventy Years of Birdwatching* (Poyser, 1974), the late HG Alexander wrote: "The years between the two Great Wars might be described as the years of reservoirs and sewage farms so far as British field ornithology is concerned."

The attractiveness of the old-fashioned sewage farm, with its extensive muddy settling beds for migrating waders, came later.

Probably Norman Joy, of Reading, first made this discovery when he began to report the remarkable waders, including four black-winged stilts hitherto only known as birds of coastal marshes and mudflats, that he had found on an unnamed "marsh" near Reading. Later that year (1923) he revealed that this was Reading sewage farm.

The most attractive sewage farms, such as Northampton and Nottingham, and some of those near London (Perry Oaks being an example) were only discovered in the late Twenties or early Thirties. David Lack, in his *Birds of Cambridgeshire* (1934) hardly gives any sewage farm records before 1927. By 1934, he was able to reveal that 152 species had been recorded at Cambridge sewage farm.

But if many of the old-fashioned sewage farms have disappeared their modern replacements can still be important cases for birds at all seasons. David Glue points out that birds such as starlings, tree sparrows and linnet - all in decline country-wide - make much use of modern works.

"Some of them could even be nationally important as resting-places for migratory birds arriving in Britain in the spring, allowing them to restock after their lengthy flights," he comments. At Aylesbury, a modern plant covering 10 hectares of land but retaining wet grassland irrigation areas, Glue, Bodenham and Bowman have recorded 61 species that have bred, or attempted to breed - an impressive number by any standard. "They include," says Glue, "water rails, snipe, yellow wagtails, whinchats and grasshopper warblers, all scarce breeding birds in Buckinghamshire."

Ironically, though, sewage treatment is going back to basics, for the final effluent clean-up stage anyway. Irrigation plots - where the partly treated liquid is soaked through wetland vegetation to filter it - are coming back into favour. They are often more effective. Many of the birds once familiar at sewage works could return, too.



Sewage dweller: snipe favour wet grassland irrigation areas
Photograph: Mike Read/Planet Earth

Across the Arctic by dog

When Wendy Smith contracted cancer she resigned herself to endless journeys to hospital. Now, writes Duff Hart-Davis, she has just returned from the first ever dog-trek clean across the North American continent

One of the less savoury moments of the journey came when the beavers started to go off. In north Quebec, wanting more nutritious food for her huskies, Wendy Smith took 40 frozen carcasses on board one of the expedition's trucks, and she was disconcerted to find that the animals were delivered skinned but with heads, tails and guts still in place. "The dogs loved them," she recalls. Too late, she realised it was a mistake to feed them the beavers whole: the huskies got diarrhoea, and the rest of the carcasses, rapidly becoming high, had to be thrown away.

Looking at Wendy, you would never guess that 10 years

ago she almost died of cancer. At 36 her eyes are bright, her complexion is glowing, her movements are quick. The fact that she looks so fit is hardly surprising, for she has just pulled off a colossal feat of endurance - the first-ever dog-trek clean across the North American continent. During the winter she mushed (drove her husky teams) more than 4,000 miles, to show other sufferers that cancer can be beaten, and to raise funds for research.

A former Army officer, she was stricken by Hodgkin's disease in 1988, and became so ill that she and her family all thought she was going to die. But she fought back with aston-

ishing courage, made a sudden recovery, and returned to energetic pursuits, leading treks in many wild parts of the world.

It was a fascination with wilderness, snow and huskies that led to her marathon mush across the Canadian Arctic. Having rounded up four supporters, she flew to Alaska last October to collect her dogs and equipment. Her team manager was Mark Howard, a policeman who for a year had given over his house in Oxford for use as an office. The member with most cold weather experience was Crispin Day, the polar explorer. Will Locke, a mountaineering pal of Mark's, joined because he had six months free, and Maggie Annat, an old friend of Wendy's, went along - as she thought - for the first couple of weeks, but ended up covering the entire distance.

In Anchorage the team spent two weeks assembling dogs, food, vehicles and other essentials. Then, in eight days, they hurtled across to Maine, on the north-east coast of America - an epic, 6,000-mile journey in itself. With three drivers sharing two hefty pick-up trucks, they were on the road for 16 hours a day. The 20 huskies travelled in a specially-built wooden box with separate compartments, 10 a side, each with its own door. Every four hours they had to be taken out and pegged, to stretch and relieve themselves (if ever let loose, they would run off or start fighting).

After two weeks' shaking down, the expedition set off on 15 November. Wendy's hope was that to be able to travel by sled, but as a back-up, in case she ran out of snow, she had an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), a Polaris quad bike, which the



In harness: Wendy Smith mushes across North America
Photograph: Mark Howard

The huskies had to wear cloth boots, and wore out 7,000 of them

resort to the ATV for more than a third of the journey.

So began a phenomenal test of stamina. Every morning the team was up in the dark at 4am, getting the huskies out and feeding them - itself a two-hour task. Wendy would start mushing at 7am, and carry on for 12 or 14 hours, stopping only for

her crew to change teams. She herself drove every yard of the way. With the sled she could warm up by occasionally jumping off and running or skating, but on the ATV she got so frozen that at the end of a stint her legs would not work, and she more or less toppled off.

Two of the team would generally be ranging ahead on snow machines, reconnoitring the trail, and if necessary breaking it. The trouble was that most of the trails that would have been open in a normal winter simply did not exist.

The snow was so thin, and the going so rough, that the sled went through three pairs of normal runners a day (at \$40 a pair), so the team nailed on thick strips of roofing polyethylene instead. The huskies had to wear cloth boots, often three sets at a time, and wore out 7,000 of them.

The worst moment came

on the afternoon of 23 Decem-

ber. After a splendid morning, on which they had covered 60 miles, mushing through the dawn, the team was on its way to an overnight rendezvous when their truck skidded on the ice of a logging trail, plunged down a 10-ft bank and landed on its side in waist-deep snow, smashing the engine block on

In making that tremendous

effort, she saw many parallels with cancer treatment. "If you have a lot of obstacles to overcome, you have to keep your goal in mind," she says. "You have to stay determined, and keep going, regardless of how tough things get. That's why we found it so hard to stop when we did; we'd set out to show that we wouldn't be daunted by any difficulty, even if it seemed insurmountable."

Wendy now aims to write a book, and come next winter, to be back in Alaska, to complete the eight-week trip down the Yukon to Nome, on the Bering Sea. "This could turn out to be just the final stage of my first trip," she says, "or it could be the second stage of a round-the-world mush". Next stop Siberia, then? Nobody who knows Wendy would put it past her.

Donations can be sent to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund at 213 Chancery House, Tolworth Close, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7EW. Details of the expedition are available on the Dog-Trek website: www.dogtrek97-98.eu.internet

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What, when, where?

Relive tales of suspense and smuggling in the Cornish town of Fowey this Sunday. Three organised walks enable you to follow in the footsteps of the romantic novelist Daphne du Maurier (1907-1986) who set many of her stories around this part of the Cornish coast. The Daphne du Maurier festival this weekend includes exhibitions, plays and a service at Tregaminion Chapel near Menabilly House. The author lived in Menabilly in 1943 and used it

as the model for Manderley, the house in *Rebecca* - which later became a Hitchcock film.

Holy Communion at Tregaminion Chapel is on Sunday at 9.30am; the *My Cousin Rachel* walk, on Sunday at 10.30am, starts at Readymoney Beach, Fowey, £3.50; the *Loving Spirit* walk, on Sunday at 1.30pm, starts at Polruan Quay, £3.50 (call 01726 74324 for details).

Sally Kindberg

Green is the colour, Chelsea is the name

Anna Pavord takes a peripheral view of the greatest show in earth

Beltane was the old way of celebrating May's rebirth, a Celtic feast of fire, sacrifice and general mayhem. Now we have the Chelsea Flower Show with the enigmatic figure of Sir Simon Hornby, president of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), as our modern day Green Man.

The show is an anachronistic triumph. No one sitting down today to plan a mammoth event of this kind would think it possible for it to take place in London SW3. The great marquee alone covers three-and-a-half acres and takes 20 men almost as many days to put up. Exhibitors spend about £20m putting together their stands, and this year there are 20 show gardens. The majority of the exhibits are live, with highly specific needs as to food and drink. These are not as easily available in Chelsea as Big Macs and halves of lager.

Part of the excitement of Chelsea is the excitement that surrounds all ephemeral, tented events: the sudden transformation of the setting, the atavistic lure of an itinerant life to those whose futures are firmly shackled to the 8.05 from Woking, the smell of crushed grass. You can get that at any county agricultural show, but Chelsea's strangeness lies in the fact that all this happens slap bang in the middle of the most densely populated city in Britain. All these pulsating, growing, flowering things suddenly arrive in the middle of a place marked out by Tarmac, concrete, tin and bareness. The other, and most important, thing that marks Chelsea out from other horticultural shows is the standard of the plant and garden exhibits. You will rarely see anywhere a display of flowering bulbs as brilliant as that put together by Avon Bulbs (stand K5, great marquee) or violas in such profusion as those brought to Chelsea by Bouts Cottage Nurseries (stand H5, great marquee).

I'm so mesmerised by the plants at Chelsea that I rarely get near the artefacts the conservatories clustered round the central marquee hissing "lifestyle, glamour" at those of us who are still strangers to the scatter cushion. This year, I'm making a determined effort to do "sundries", as the RHS quaintly calls them. I'll be making a beeeline for:

• Errington Reay and Company's salt-glazed stoneware pots. This Tyneside pottery was founded in 1878 and is the last remaining commercial pottery making salt-glazed ware in England. The soft muted colours sit well in a garden setting and the sheen of the glaze catches the light in an intriguing way. Errington Reay and Co, Tyneside Pottery Works,

Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 7HU (01434 344245). Chelsea stand NR3.

• Great Houses, Castles and Gardens of Ireland. There is still less awareness than there should be over here of the fabulously romantic cache of gardens only a ferry ride away in Ireland. We're sailing again along the south coast of Ireland for our holiday this summer. I'm allowed ashore only once or twice to look at works, so have to make the most of the opportunities. Get the new booklet about Irish properties and gardens open to the public from Ms A de Buitléar Hillbrook, Dargle Valley, Bray, Co Wicklow, Ireland (0035 312 862777). Chelsea stand CW7.

• Ivelot Books, which stocks a wide range of antiquarian books related to gardening. They have luscious botanical prints too, including fern prints by Walter Hood Fitch, botanical artist at Kew Gardens in the mid-19th century. Ivelot Books Ltd, 18 Fairlawn Drive, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6IP (01737 764520). Chelsea stand EA105.

• Raffles Thatched Garden Buildings: in my mind's eye I see one of these at the end of our lawn with a hammock strung, Guyanese style, from the central post over to one of the outer supports. Focal points - that's what I need in life. A pity they come so expensive. But the birds would love it. Free nest sites all round. Raffles, Laundry Cottage, Prestwold Hall, Prestwold, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 5AQ (01509 881426). Chelsea stand SR22.

• Starkie and Starkie's sharpening systems: whetstones, files, cones and steels, including the DMT Doublestone Diafold, a folding whetstone that offers two grits for a greater sharpening range. I like the idea of whetstones. Unfortunately whetstones don't like me, and I have never acquired the lazy ease, the flashing *pas de deux*, by which our butcher sharpens his cleavers. "It's a man thing," said one of our daughters. But there's no reason why it shouldn't be a woman thing too. Starkie and Starkie, Unit 39, The Heathers Industrial Park, Freeman's Common, Leicestershire LE2 7SQ (01162 854772). Chelsea stand EA36.

Admission to the Chelsea Flower Show is by advance booking only. A credit card hotline is open 24 hours a day on 0171-344 4343. Tuesday and Wednesday are reserved for members of the RHS. An all-day (8am-5pm) ticket on Thursday costs £25, an afternoon ticket (3.30-8pm) costs £14 and an evening ticket (5.30-8pm) costs £8. An all-day ticket on Friday (8am-5pm) costs £23. Plants and sundries will be sold after 5pm on Friday.



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SINCLAIR RE

The germinator

A stand at Chelsea commemorates the cotton broker who sowed the seeds of modern horticulture in Britain, writes Ursula Buchan

We live in a golden age for mass gardening, yet gardeners, being no less human than anyone else, are prey to fits of nostalgia for times gone by – particularly when it comes to the disappearance of the rich plantsman patron.

In the first quarter of this century, there were a number of wealthy amateur gardeners with estates or large gardens, who liked to spend their money sponsoring plant-hunting expeditions. They were individualistic and acquisitive, and often highly competitive. Sometimes they also owned a nursery, sometimes not, but always they divided the collected seed amongst their friends, and they usually forged close links with botanic gardens. Prominent among them were John Charles Williams at Caerhays, Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury, Sir Frederick Stern from Highdown and HD McLaren from Bodnant. The man who gave the lead was Arthur Kilpin Bulley (1861-1942).

Bulley, a successful Liverpool cotton broker, made several gardens in the Wirral, the most magnificent of which was his last – at Ness, near Neston, where he also founded a famous nursery and seed merchants, Bees. For 20 years, starting in 1904, Bulley paid wholly or in part for explorations to the temperate regions of the Far East, particularly China, by George Forrest, Frank Kidson Ward, Roland Cooper and Reginald Farrer. These intrepid individuals endured hardships, loneliness and fear to collect hardy plants, especially alpine species and rhododendrons. All of them are commemorated in plants they introduced. Many of these were first distributed commercially by Bees, and a number are well established in cultivation.

The recently published *A Pioneering Plantsman, AK Bulley and the Great Plant Hunters*, by Brenda McLean (HMSO, £29), shows Bulley to have been a fascinating and complicated man. Although well connected in the purple of commerce, he was a lifelong Socialist and agnostic (he maintained this was a reaction to attending Marlborough College, which was churchy and conservative).

He was a humane man, who ran his nursery as a co-operative and allowed visitors into his garden free of charge all the year round. He died in 1942, after 44 years at Ness, and in 1948 his daughter, Lois, gave the garden of 60 acres (24 hectares) to the University of Liverpool. It is now an environmental and horticultural research station for the university, and a much admired public garden.

This year is the centenary of Bulley's move to Ness, a milestone to be celebrated next week at Chelsea Flower Show, with an exhibit staged jointly by Ness Botanic Gardens and the Alpine Garden Society. It is fitting that the designer is Dr Christopher Grey-Wilson, himself a plant hunter as well as a botanist, gardener and writer.

The exhibit is principally composed of a number of large and very fine, well-weathered stone troughs, planted with alpines amenable enough for amateurs to grow successfully. Twelve of the troughs are of Triassic sandstone, and come from Ness. They were gathered from nearby farms in the Sixties and Seventies, as development encroached, and are usually to be seen at the gardens, filled with rock plants. The largest weighs about half a tonne. The others were provided by the Alpine Garden Society (AGS), which owns an enviable number, including a stone coffin.

The exhibit also includes outcrops of tufa, that strange, porous, volcanic, alpine-friendly rock, together with a raised bed and a pond, the stone for which has been given by the aptly-named Hard Rock Quarry, near Skelmersdale. This stone will be reused at Ness after the show is over.

It is an ambitious display, even for the AGS, which last year won the Holford Medal, the prize for the best amateur exhibit at any Royal Horticultural Society show during the



Champion of the plant hunters: AK Bulley

year. The society depends entirely on its members, both for setting up the Chelsea exhibit and for growing the plants.

This one looks set to make quite an impression in the marquee, with bright jewels of mountain flowers sparkling in the troughs, the tufa, and the raised bed. The gods have not been kind, it is true; the strange weather conditions this spring will mean no charming, golden-yellow *Primula bulleyana* or reddish-pink *Primula beesiana* to commemorate AK Bulley in flower. Nevertheless, visitors to the stand will be left in no

doubt of the achievements of the Liverpool entrepreneur who did so much to enrich British gardening.

Last Sunday, during a break from manhandling troughs and tufa rock in the marquee, Chris Grey-Wilson told me of his forthcoming plant-hunting expedition to the Caucasus. The money to fund such a trip has come mostly in grants from public bodies and charitable trusts. There will be no help from any garden-minded mobile phone mogul or computer millionaire, it seems. Ah, change and decay ...

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WEEKEND WORK

Continue to sow small quantities of radish and lettuce at two-weekly intervals to encourage a continuous supply throughout the season. I have sown 'Frisby' lettuce (Dobies, 92p) for its frilly, cut-and-come-again leaves, and a different Batavian type called 'Pierre Benite' (Unwins, 99p).

Sow runner beans, either inside where you can hurry them on, or directly outside. Either way, you should have a couple of loads of compost seething quietly in the trench they are to go into.

In the south, make sure that plants such as tomatoes and marrows are hardened off before planting out. This also applies to tomato plants that you have bought in. They have often been whipped from polytunnel to sales point with no hardening off in between. In the north, wait until June before risking tomatoes outside.

Plant dahlias, covering the tubers with about 3in of soil. The bronze-leaved varieties are showy, but all dahlias are difficult to work into the average flower border. They leave large holes until midsummer and then overcompensate by crowding out their neighbours. Use them to follow on from oriental poppies, which won't be bullied.

Prune osmanthus to a well-balanced shape after it has flowered. They make attractive domes if you cut back over-ambitious leaders at this time of year.

Wise gardeners will start staking herbaceous perennials soon, before they really need it.

Keep sedums compact by cutting back the first shoots and forcing them to resprout, or by winding a web of soft string round them, attached to a short stockade of sticks set round each clump.

Continue to deadhead daffodils, leaving stems and leaves intact. This will force them to concentrate on building up next year's bulbs.

Attack bindweed, which is already curling in its hideous way through clematis and roses. Pull groundsel before it seeds. Hoe out creeping buttercup, a pretty weed but a bully.

CUTTINGS

Cary Goode, who has created a fine six-acre garden at Thornhill Park, Stalbridge, Dorset, is running a course on the best way to plant a gravel garden. Properly done, this can be a labour-saving and versatile way of gardening, as anyone who has seen Beth Chatto's gravel garden in Essex will know. A gravel garden provides a good bridge between formal and wild areas in a garden and introduces a habitat that is especially suited to drought-resistant plants. The course is planned for 9 June (10am-3.30pm) and the cost is £40. For further information phone 01963 362746.

Unwins' best-selling runner bean is the variety 'Galaxy' (Unwins £2.79), which, say the seedsmen, has been bred to produce a reliable crop even in the hottest summer. Usually, hot, dry weather inhibits the beans, and their flowers will not set into pods. Runner beans can be sown outside any time between now and the beginning of July. A packet contains enough beans for a 20-ft row. Call 01945 588 522 for stockists.

Sonia Wright, whose nursery I mentioned recently (*Independent*, 28 March) has written to point out that I gave her home address rather than the nursery address. I'm sorry. Devotees in search of Barnhaven primulas, or other plants in her "wide and somewhat eccentric collection" (her description) should make their way to The Old Vineyard, Grove Farm, Stinchcombe, Nr Mildenhall, Marlborough, Wiltshire (01672 514003). The nursery is open daily (except Wed and Sun) from 10am to 6pm.

Anna Pavord

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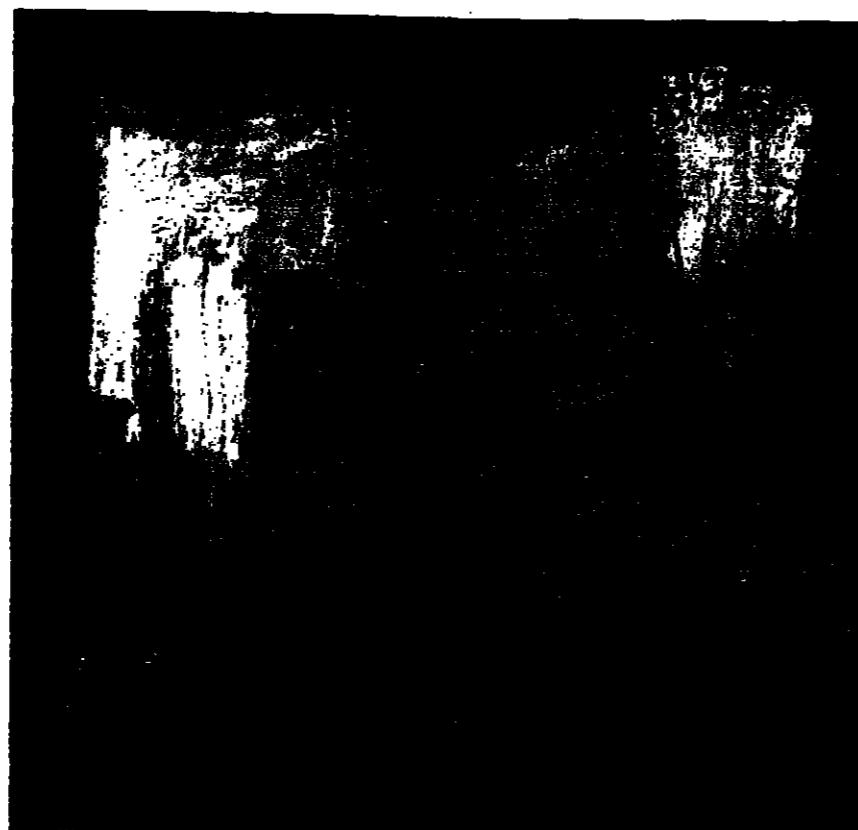
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Abstract outlet: on show at Oxfordshire's Merriscourt gallery (below) - Arthur Neal's 'Garden 5' (oil on canvas, £2,800), far left; Julian Bailey's 'Bathers' (oil on board, £2,500), left; and 'Lerrion 1' (oil on canvas, £3,000) by Arthur Neal, below left

You say pig shed, we say art gallery



Abstract paintings on a working farm? Catherine Stebbings visits a gallery with a difference

A pig shed on a working farm in the Cotswolds is an unlikely yet striking setting for a serious contemporary art gallery. Recent exhibitions and a lively summer show at Merriscourt Gallery are attracting art collectors from all over the country.

The gallery is run by Nick Clements, a specialist picture-framer, and Hermoine Owen, a painter. "We're unconventional types who wanted to show paintings that we admired but felt were not being shown – and we wanted to do so in a rather different way," explains Nick.

The display of abstract and representational art looks entirely worthy of a Cork Street gallery in London. Huge, energetic oils by Julian Bailey and intensely coloured Indian scenes by Susan-Jayne Hocking are among the paintings currently on show.

The bolder the better, as far as Nick is concerned. "I like it when they slap the paint on, being a bit wild about it, and really enjoy themselves," he says. The gallery is a relaxed, unpretentious place where visitors can feel at home. Walkers pop in leaving rows of muddy boots on the doorstep; dogs and children play in the courtyard around Paul Grelle's cast-iron *Toll Tower*.

Yet, for all the laid-back atmosphere, this is a serious outlet for art. The intention is to appeal not so much to the connoisseur as to those who are relatively new to the art market. And Hermoine points out: "that gives us some licence with what we can show."

The gallery is well worth a visit from anyone thinking of embarking on an art collection, unsure of where to start and

what to buy. Neither the place nor the prices are inhibiting. The artists shown here are exciting, intriguing and accomplished, yet charges range from £250 to £4,000. Here looking at pictures is fun and buying paintings is rewarding. Not surprisingly, people tend to come back for more.

Paintings and shows change frequently. A number of painters, including Hermoine herself, are often exhibited here, but the gallery is also always introducing fresh talent. Future plans include a retrospective of André Biacat (1909-1996) and one-man shows by Arthur Neal, Julian Bailey and Vince Tutton.

The gallery is well worth a visit from anyone thinking of embarking on an art collection, unsure of where to start and



Merriscourt Gallery is at Merriscourt Farmhouse, Churchill, near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 6QX (01608 639734)

GAMES

WILLIAM HARTSTON A POLITICO-MUSICOCOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF EVERYTHING

Britain's place in Europe is a matter of serious concern to us all, with the question of political and monetary integration perhaps the single most important issue of the present day. Yet last weekend showed just how serious it really is, and brought home the real issue facing us in dramatic fashion. The conclusion any thinking person can no longer avoid is clear: *If we do not join the Single European Currency, we may never again win the Eurovision Song Contest*.

Let us get one thing clear from the start: we had the best song. Every single nation, whether signed up for the euro or not, placed the British entry among its top 10. No other country can claim such a success.

But just look at the story told in Table 1, below: of the 25 entries to the contest, eight were among those that have signed up for membership of the single currency. Those eight awarded the

UK an average of 5.0 points. The other 16 nations (excluding the UK, which could not vote for itself) awarded an average of 7.9 points. A huge discrepancy.

We see a similar pattern if we look at the scores awarded to Germany and Portugal, broken down according to euro membership or non-membership. Scores from the euro-nations work out at an average of 5.4 for Germany and 2.6 for Portugal, yet the non-euro countries awarded them averages of 2.3 and 1.2 respectively.

Table 2 (right), however, shows that the situation is not as simple as it might seem. The first column of figures gives the total number of points given to each euro-nation by their seven fellow single-currency partners; the second column gives the points they received from the 16 non-members. If we add up the totals, we see 159 points given by euro to euro and 336 points given by non-euro to euro, giving averages of 22.7 against 21.0 – an insignificant difference. Yet just look at the scores for Finland and Ireland, both scoring almost all their points from non-euro nations, despite having signed up for the euro themselves.

Table 2: Votes cast for euro-nations

	euro	non-euro
France	0	3
Spain	7	14
Germany	38	36
Portugal	18	19
Netherlands	52	99
Belgium	44	79
Finland	0	22
Ireland	3	61

There are only two possible conclusions: either the euro countries were trying to disguise their evident bias by an agreement not to vote for Finland or Ireland, or they simply did not know that Finland and Ireland had joined.

But the scores given to Israel reveal the truth: the winning singer received 87 of her points from the eight euro countries and exactly the same number from the 16 non-euro. The conclusion is inescapable: the single currency nations all voted for Israel just to stop the UK winning. The sooner we join the better.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Gerard Benson, 67, poet, editor, and one of the three people responsible for *Poems on the Underground*.

I've always been a player of games. I had a grandfather I used to play dominoes with, which I loved doing because he was an old buffer, really. He kept up a kind of commentary of little rhymes. When you put down a tile, he'd say: "Lay a double, lay for trouble" or something. Perhaps not that; I've forgotten it all now.

My other grandfather was a great player of solo whist. He was an ancient Irishman who could remember entire games. It actually got very boring; he could list all the cards that each player had held and the order in which they should have been played. He might have been a fine mathematician, but he was a bus-driver of both horse-drawn and motor-buses.

I've always been keen on chess. A few years ago, the GLC hosted two chess tournaments in which the greatest players in the world were playing. I went along to write a nice human-interest piece about it for *The Literary Review*. I

was talking to a friend at the reception, when a lady bustled up to me and said: "Ah, here you are. Could you come over and be photographed?" She'd mistaken me for Boris Spassky, the ex-world champion of chess. I actually didn't look anything like him, but I was about the same age, and we're both very handsome, so it was an understandable mistake.

For a few moments, I had this wonderful fantasy that I was going to be made to play chess against Karpov, or at least Nigel Short, but it didn't happen. I think Karpov would have known I wasn't Boris Spassky, even if the lady from the GLC hadn't.

So that was one of my great sporting occasions: when I nearly had to play Karpov.

Gerard Benson edits Nemo's Almanac, the world's oldest literary quiz (available from the publisher at 46 Ashwell Road, Manningham, Bradford BD8 9DU for £2 including p+p). His Bradford and Beyond is a journal in sonnets including two poems about chess (Flammarion Press, £5.95 from specialist bookshops).

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

The bare moves of a game never tell you one of the most important things: what the loser was thinking just before the rook fell in on him. Just look at the diagram position. White to play. Illésas-Yermolinsky, played this week in Madrid. Black has just played 34...Qxb3 and his thoughts might well have been any of the following:

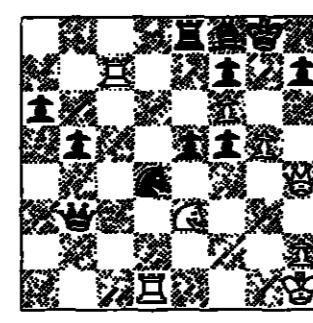
a) I've got the guy on the ropes. I have bishop and three pawns for a rook. I have four passed pawns, everything's defended and I'm even attacking his knight on e3.

b) Everything looks OK as far as I can see; I hope he doesn't have any trick I've missed.

c) Please God don't let him find 35.g6.

I suspect that Black's true thoughts were more b) than the others. When he played 21...Bd7 and 22...g6, Black probably missed the idea of 25.b3 followed by Bxe5 and Rxd7 – it's not the sort of thing you allow your opponent to do if it is avoidable. After that, Black's play was led mainly by tactical necessity and improvisation until the diagram position was reached. But if Black had seen 35.g6, he would probably not have captured on b3.

After 35.g6! Black cannot take with the f-pawn because of mate on h7. After 35...hxg6 36.Rg1! Black has no time to take on c3 because of the threat of 37.Rxg4+! That is not an easy threat to meet,



and 36...Bg7 had an air of desperation about it.

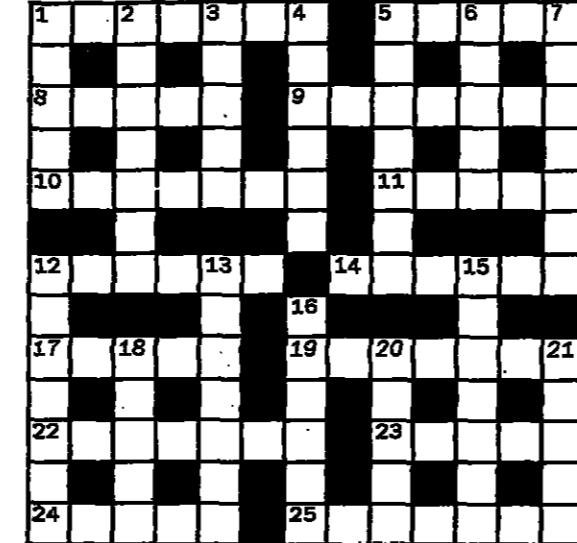
Rather than enter the obscurity of a position with a rook for five pawns after 37.Rxg7! Kxg7, Illésas played 37.Rxg6! anyway, and once he had avoided the trap of 38.Rg1? Qxg1+ 39.Kxg1 Nf3+, the game was decided.

White: Miguel Illésas
Black: Alex Yermolinsky

1 e4 c5 23 Qh4 Pg7
2 Nc3 e6 24 f6 Bff7
3 Nf3 d6 25 b3 Nxa3
4 d4 cxd4 26 Bxe5 dx5
5 Nxd4 Nf6 27 Nf5 ex5
6 Ne2 Be7 28 Rxf7 Qe6
7 0-0 Nf6 29 Rfd1 Nxc2
8 Be3 Bd7 30 ex5 gxf5
9 Nb3 a6 31 Rc7 Rad8
10 f4 b5 32 Bd5 Rxd5
11 a3 0-0 33 Nxd5 Nd4
12 Bf3 Qc7 34 Ne3 Qxd3
13 g4 Bc8 35 g6 hxg6
14 g5 Nd7 36 Rg1 Bg7
15 Bg2 Nb6 37 Rxg6 Qb1+
16 f5 Nc4 38 Kg2 Ne6
17 Bc1 Re8 39 Rg7+ Nxe7
18 Oh7 Nxe5 40 fxe7 Kxg7
19 Kh1 Qb6 41 Qg5+ Kb8
20 Bf4 Bff7 42 Qh6+ Kg8
21 Rad1 Bd7 43 Qg5+ Kb8
22 Nd4 g6 44 Qh5 resigns

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3612 Saturday 16 May



ACROSS

- 1 Unfeigned (7)
- 5 Dapper (5)
- 8 Jeweller's weight (5)
- 9 Faint gleam (7)
- 10 Banger (7)
- 11 Frequently (5)
- 12 Uncomfortable (6)
- 14 Negligent (6)
- 17 Overwrought (3,2)
- 19 Fundamental (7)
- 20 In proportion (3,4)
- 23 Doctrine (5)
- 24 Hooligan (5)
- 25 Area of bishop's jurisdiction (7)

DOWN

- 1 Knitted footwear (5)
- 2 Foster (7)
- 3 Additional (5)
- 4 Young bird (6)
- 5 Offensive (7)
- 6 Allure (5)
- 7 Men's undergarments (1-6)
- 12 Sad (7)
- 13 High singing voice (7)
- 15 Anger (7)
- 16 Short journey (6)
- 18 Incisor or molar, e.g. (5)
- 20 The same (5)
- 21 Machine tool (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Bawdy, 4 Insole (Body and soul), 9 Narrate, 10 Vodka, 11 Step, 12 Cabbage, 13 Ash, 14 Gust, 15 Ugly, 18 See, 20 Overlap, 21 Aché, 24 Adult, 25 Ukulele, 26 Calico, 27 Kaput. DOWN: 1 Banish, 2 Worse, 3 Year, 5 Navy blue, 6 Oddball, 7 Enamel, 8 Teach, 13 Athletic, 15 Unequal, 17 Mosaic, 18 Spout, 19 Recent, 22 Creep, 23 Sulk.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

East-West game; dealer South

North	♦Q5
South	♦Q 8 6 4
East	♦A K 7 6 3
West	♦10 5
East	♦A 7 4 3 2
West	♦V 5 2
South	♦Q 10 8 2
East	♦8 4
West	♦K 8
South	♦K 10 7 3
East	♦9 5
West	♦A K Q 6 2

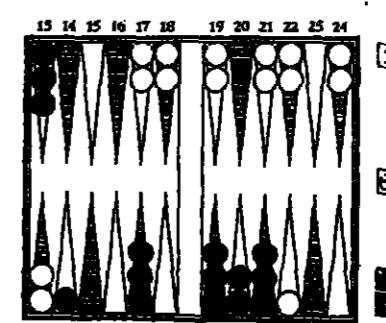
It was quite a subtle defensive point and a lack of clear thinking that led West in the wrong direction. I am quite sure that it was because the winning play looked wrong that he went astray.

South opened 1♦, North responded 1♦, and South rebid 1♥. North raised to 3♥ and South went to 4♥. West led ♦J, dummy played low and, after some thought, East took his ace and returned the suit with the fall of the king clarifying the spade position for both defenders. It all looked routine, and declarer started with a heart to the queen, which held, and a second heart. He tried ♦10 from hand but West produced the jack and drew a third round of trumps with his ace. The defence had now reached a critical point and, hoping that his partner held a missing club honour, West switched to ♦4. No joy; the ten from dummy held the trick and declarer was able to claim.

It all passed off unnoticed as a routine result at the table, for a diamond switch would not have helped either – after one club ruff, the suit is established for declarer, but what about a third round of spades?

Assuming declarer has a 2-4-2-5 hand pattern – very likely from his failure to bid no-trumps – the winning defence (which does not require partner to hold anything in clubs) is to concede a ruff and discard with a third round of spades! If declarer ruffs in hand, he can establish but not reach his long club suit; if he ruffs on the table and discards a club from hand, West wins the fourth round of clubs for the setting trick.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that caused an argument in the weekly chouette. The team, playing Black, consisted of three players. The captain had already doubled but the other two team members hadn't (all three cubes are shown in the diagram). Black now rolled 21. Should they play (a) 13/11, (b) 13/11, 4/3?

Always remember that backgammon is a race. Here, before the roll, the racing counts are Black 114, White 108. So even after the roll Black will be slightly behind. The captain argued hard that move (a) was correct. His view was that White was unlikely to escape and so he could still attack next roll when he might roll a better number. The team wanted to hit with move (b) as in many variations – for example when White throws one of the nine numbers that keep him on the bar – they would be able to double White out. Even if White does hit, Black is far from dead because if he re-enters at once it could be anybody's game.

In a chouette the captain has the final choice of move and the team could not persuade him to agree to their choice. White's next roll was 65 which he played 22/11 and he went on to win the game easily. Who was right?

The answer is the hit by a big margin. For the team members, it is true that after move (a) they may still have a good double next roll or the roll after. For the captain, however, the choice should have been crystal clear. He had already doubled and, as I have often said, once you have doubled you must play aggressively as the cube can no longer help you. By hitting, the captain would have won not only more games but also many more gammons as quite often he will close out White's lone back man. It may seem odd to give your opponent a voluntary shot after escaping your own back men but in this case the gains far outweigh the risks.

Hot pod
from
Hungary

Hear A

مَدَا مَنْ الْأَصْل

16/RACING

Newbury

	HYPERION
1.30 Makebelieve Island	3.35 Bedevilled
2.00 Rainbow Ways	4.05 Playgroup
2.30 YORKSHIRE (hep)	4.35 Hawadeth
3.00 Among Men (nb)	

GONG: Good to Firm.
DRAW: Round course - inside; Straight course - centre.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low numbers may have an edge in 405.
Racescourse is south west of town near A34 Railway station (service from London, Paddington) across the course. ADMISMISSION: Members £3.75; Testaments £10; Silver Ring £4 (OAPs free).
LEADING TRAINERS: J Gosden 31 winners from 19 runs (26.3%); P Chapman-Hynes 29-148 (18.9%); C. Pollard 22-87 (13.9%); J Dunlop 15-153 (14.8%).
LEADING JOCKEYS: J Reale 46 wins from 270 rides (17%); L Dettori 45-212 (16.2%); T Odell 34-233 (12.6%); Pat Eddery 28-89 (10.4%).
FAVOURITES: 1.30 were 545 odds (17.4%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: See Of Groveson (405).

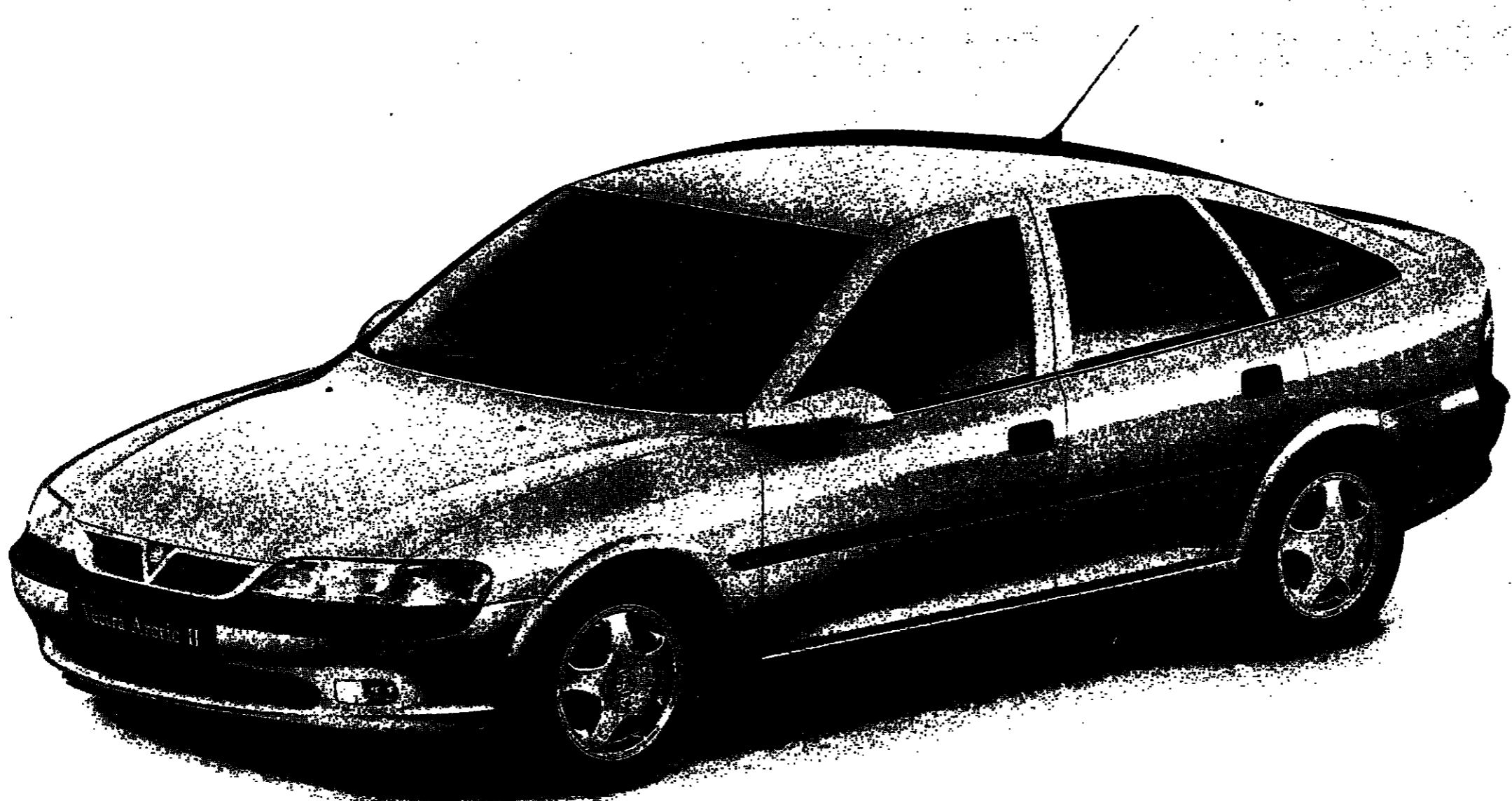
1.30 KINGWOOD STUD MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2YO 6f
CUSH (Ms Stoker) Ms J Col 9.0
DIAMOND GINGER (J B R Leeks) Lhd Hannon 9.0
FOREST GREEN (E T Kay) R Harmer 9.0
GREEN HORSE (Patsy) M Harmer 9.0
GOLD HORSE (Patsy) M Harmer 9.0
GRECHAN TALE (Sally) J Jarvis 9.0
HARD LINES (Lisa) P Chapman-Hynes 9.0
KOMAL (T2) M Mrs Gary Chapman 9.0
MARSHMALLOW (Lisa) L Dettori 9.0
MOON HONEY (G S Morris) N Col 9.0
PATRON SAINT (The Royal Ascot) H M Blundell 9.0
PRINCE OF ARAGON (K T Ivory) K Herry 9.0
SPRING PURSUIT (Felicity) R Chapman 9.0
SYLVIA LEGEND (USA) (Edith Green) Lhd Hannon 9.0
TENURE (Lisa) L Dettori 9.0
BLACK ROCKET (Karma) H Alcock 9.0
LADY PEPPERMINT (Karma) S Moore 9.0
LITTLE PIPPIN (Mrs B Swell) Bolding 9.0
WINNERSHIP (Ayeshed) Fem Lhd Hannon 9.0

BETTING: 4-1 Hard Lines; 6-1 Moon Honey; 7-1 Patron Saint; 8-1 Gold Horse; 9-1 Spring Pursuit; 10-1 Prince of Aragon; 11-1 Black Rocket; 12-1 Lady Peppermint; 13-1 Little Pippin; 14-1 Winnership.
BETTING: 4-1 Hard Lines; 6-1 Moon Honey; 7-1 Patron Saint; 8-1 Gold Horse; 9-1 Spring Pursuit; 10-1 Prince of Aragon; 11-1 Black Rocket; 12-1 Lady Peppermint; 13-1 Little Pippin; 14-1 Winnership.

2.00 LONDON GOLD CUP RATED HANDICAP (CLASS C) £15,000 added 3YO 1m 4f
004-1 WAVE ROCK (USA) (The Earl Cadogan) J Dutton 7.0
005-2 JAAZI (USA) (H P) (Harmon Al Macdonald) M Stoute 8.5
006-3 RAINBOW STARS (USA) (John) M Hills 2.10
007-4 KING DURAS (USA) (K) R Harmer 8.9
008-5 GULDHORN (USA) (John) M Hills 2.10
009-6 JONES HIGHLIGHT (USA) (John) R Harmer 8.9
010-7 COURAGEOUS (USA) (H P) (Harmon Al Macdonald) P Colle 8.10
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145-2 JAAZI (USA) (H P) (Harmon Al Macdonald) M Stoute 8.5
146-3 RAINBOW STARS (USA) (John) M Hills 2.10
147-4 KING DURAS (USA) (K) R Harmer 8.9
148-5 GULDHORN (USA) (John) M Hills 2.10
149-6 JONES HIGHLIGHT (USA) (John) R Harmer 8.9
150-7 COURAGEOUS (USA) (H P) (Harmon Al Macdonald) P Colle 8.10
151-8 FORTRESS (USA) (John) R Harmer 8.9
152-9 WAVE ROCK (USA) (The Earl Cadogan) J Dutton 7.0
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It is a rare player who can protect himself with a suit of irony



**MIKE
ROWBOTTOM**
DEFENDS THE
PLAYERS
THE FANS
LOVE TO HATE

THE master of ceremonies did his best to build the atmosphere before Charlton Athletic's play-off match on Wednesday night. "I want those players to hear you in the dressing-room," he exclaimed. "Come on, West Stand! What's happened to you? All Right! Now let's hear you, East Stand!"

Most of the 15,000 souls present responded dutifully, encouraged by the manic intervention of three drummers running around on the pitch like extras from a Ken Russell film. But all the noise was no more than dress rehearsal for an occasion which came truly alive a minute or so after the kick-off as Ipswich Town's piratical full-back, Mauricio Taricco,

received the ball – and vehement boos from every red and white section of the ground.

It was The Valley's way of reminding the Argentinian that his controversial contributions in the first leg four days earlier had not been forgotten. Men, women and children carried out their obligation with the utmost diligence.

They booed Taricco each and every time he became involved in play, regardless of the rising fortunes of their own team. By the final minute, with Charlton 2-0 up on aggregate, the East, West, North and South stands had joined in joyful chorus – "Que sera, sera, whatever will be will be, we're going to Wembury, que

sera, sera." The Red Red Robins were bob-bob-bobbing along until, provocatively, the Ipswich No 3 accepted a pass from his captain, Jason Cundy.

Well, that was it, wasn't it? The songs were stilled, and the boos rang round the ground once more. Never mind Wembley, there was still important business to be done here.

Taricco's sins on Sunday, according to the Charlton fans, had included a late foul which had halted a promising breakaway, involvement in the incident which saw the Charlton full-back, Danny Mills, dismissed and a post-match scuffle. The fact that Taricco came out of the latter requiring stitches in a broken nose was clearly not regarded as being even a faintly mitigating factor.

It would be unfair to accuse the Charlton crowd of racism. But the fact that Taricco was an Argentinian – and an Argentinian with attitude, three-day stubble and a wild mane of hair – did not help his cause.

For certain players in this country, simply being different is enough to make them more vulnerable to abuse or, on occasions, disciplinary action. Earlier this season, I saw the exotic and impudent David Ginola booked, amid a welter of un-punished nastiness, for... well, he was waving his arms about a bit, I suppose, and looking quintessentially French. Perhaps it was for persistent Gallicism.

Ginola, of course, has grown used to boos. All over the country, football supporters have set aside their inclinations of admiration for his sublime talent and laid him for being a diver, a drifter, a foreigner.

It was one of Jürgen Klinsmann's great achievements in the Premiership that he was able to acknowledge the reputation which had preceded him to England and to launch himself immediately into a pre-emptive strike. Every goal the German scored for Spurs was marked with an exuberant self-parodying splashdown. But it is a rare player who can protect himself with a suit of irony.

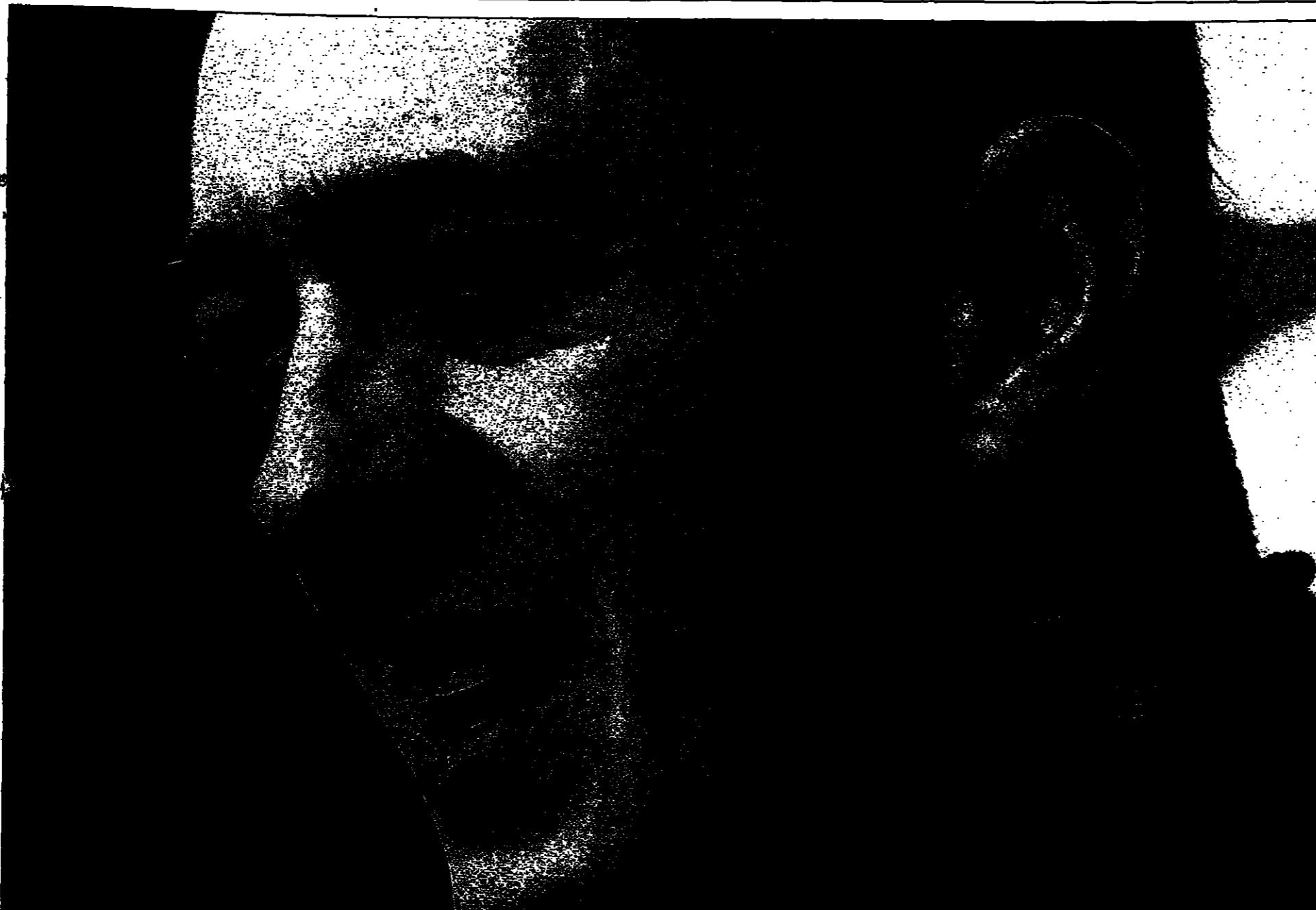
What I find difficult to understand is this – why is it that

football crowds have an infinite capacity to hold grudges against certain players for misdemeanours real or imagined without being equally particular in their recollection of positive contributions?

When the craggy centre-back receives the ball, why should spontaneous cheers not break out in commemoration of his crucial goalmouth challenge in the last match? When play sweeps across to the tricky little winger, why should there not be generous applause to mark his delightful dribble the previous Saturday? Perhaps it is because there is nothing quite like a good, cathartic hate session safely confined within the ritual of a sporting contest.

Those Charlton fans who strolled away from The Valley in midweek must have felt doubly happy. Natural feelings of excitement and anticipation would have been uppermost in their minds. But Taricco made it so much better. There was an unexpected delight for the home supporters towards the end of the game when the unfortunate full-back found himself with one of Ipswich's rare chances of scoring. His booming drive flew yards high, miles wide.

What could be better than that? As the ball landed high in the stand, thousands of jubilant people stood up and shook their fingers out like so many derisive Wurzel Gummidges. Ah, the beautiful game...



Chris Boardman: 'Now my body seems to have clicked and I have races coming up that I can get my teeth into'

Photograph: Peter Jay

Boardman plans for the pressure

THESE are critical days for Chris Boardman. He has spent the past six months reviewing his "poor" 1997, revising his training system, and recovering from illness.

"This period is the key," he said before returning to his European campaign after a spell at his Cheshire home. "It's critical. My condition is the best it has been all year. I just need a chance to prove it in races."

Six years ago he put British cycling on the Olympic gold standard for the first time in 72 years. He followed that by becoming the first Briton to wear the revered yellow jersey of the Tour de France leader for more than a day, then tacked on three world titles with world records to match.

Inside five years he had achieved what others would consider a lifetime's work,

including an MBE. Amid the triumphs, fate issued a warning. His 1995 Tour de France ended minutes after starting. Boardman was carried from the course with a fractured wrist and ankle.

He came back with a string of victories, including an Olympic bronze, and regained the world hour record (56.375 kilometres) and the world 4,000m pursuit title, also with a world record. Both were in a world record. Then it went quiet, by Boardman's standards.

He wore the yellow last year after winning the opening time trial in Rouen, and won a bronze medal in the World Time Trial Championship in San Sebastian.

"I was scared by last year's poor results," he said. "I thought I had arrived at the

point where things stopped going up, and that this could be it. When I got ill early in the season I ignored it somewhat and pushed on with training. It was a mistake."

Boardman caught influenza in February, and spent weeks trying to shake off its effects. "It hit hard and for a lot longer than I wanted. It left me down for weeks. Now my body seems to have clicked, and I have races coming up that I can get my teeth into."

A change in training philosophy was introduced by Denis Roux, the trainer of Boardman's GAN team, after Boardman admitted to overtraining. They cut

out hard riding stints of two to three hours. "It seems those were damaging to me," Boardman said.

Before the inevitable pressure of the Tour de France in July, Boardman faces an important test at home. Britain's new race, the nine-day Prudential, opens on 23 May in Stirling, and he will be backed by the Australians Stuart O'Grady and Henk Vogels, Sweden's Magnus Backstedt, Germany's Jens Voigt, and Italy's Eros Poli.

"It is my only race in Britain and I would dearly like to make the most of it. It doesn't fall at an ideal time, and it is impossible to peak for that and the Tour.

"Tough choices have to be made but hopefully I will get there with some good form. The course doesn't suit me but maybe I can win the leader's jersey in the opening time trial, and then one of our team can take it over."

"The only major difference to our Tour de France plans from previous years is that a high placing in the overall positions is not an initial objective. That takes the pressure off me a little. I will just go for the opening time trial, a stage win, and take it day by day in the mountains."

He will contest the World 4,000m Pursuit Championship, the discipline that made his reputation, "simply because it is convenient to fit in this year. I have nothing to prove there."

The World Time Trial Championship in October is his

final challenge of the year. "It is important that all the major players are there in Holland. I am never consistent at the end of the year, and I want to set that score before I move on."

His career may stretch to another four years. "To put on a time limit is important," said Boardman, 30 in August and a father of four. "Retirement is very much on my mind. The way I do things is very intense. It gets results but it is very time-consuming."

"I will go for another two years and make it count. Then see what happens. I may find that there are still things I want to achieve and I am motivated to continue. So I could go on for four years."

"I am not one to say I will carry on while I can still get the money. I want to give 100 per cent or not do it at all."

At the beginning of the week Smith played his first cards by going north and slipping back

to eighth, humbling nearly 200 miles behind the leader, Grant Dalton. Everyone was anticipating the "wall" of no wind sitting in the Atlantic about 500 miles from the finish. Smith made the big move 700 miles before that Standbridge, who had been disputing the lead, eventually peeled away to engage Smith.

Smith's early move was brave. However well developed weather pattern prediction programmes have become, they are hard to trust with such a long lead time. But fortune has favoured his bravery and when those weather system cards were fulfilling the prophecy and being dealt again on Tuesday, the gap was down to 20 miles and Dalton was in a muck sweat. "All the betting on board is that Lawrie will win this leg," Dalton said. Other top navigators ripped up their own betting slips and started praying the lead horses would run into a ditch.

Dalton had been involved in his own strategy of protecting his overall third position by keeping himself between fourth-placed Knut Frostad in Innovation Kvaerner and the finish line. That he has done, but has slipped to fifth and lost the points which would have given him a crack at Krantz for second overall on the final leg to Southampton.

A win would not only give Smith two Volvo trophies but after the mood of the Silk Cut campaign, and even second would make him fifth overall and give him a crack at a podium spot on the sprint into his home territory of the Solent and Southampton. The dismasting in the Southern Ocean when strongly placed to take the honours on leg five now looks more costly than ever.

The extra excitement in the French Atlantic sailing centre was over the performance of the all-women crew on EF Education. Last night they were still fourth and could yet improve. In addition to French skipper Christine Guillou, they have two of La Rochelle's finest in Isabelle Autissier and Christine Briand to give them local knowledge. And, in terms of all-women crews competing on level terms against men, this leg has consolidated a credibility that has been growing and growing.

Positions, Digest, page 24

The Catherine Oldfield Trophy – a nightmare memory to mar Southport's big day



**CHRIS
MAUME**
SPORT
ON TV

THE greatest day in Southport's history comes tomorrow, when they play Cheltenham Town in the FA Umbro Trophy final. The highlight of my football career should have been playing at their ground, Haig Avenue, for Southport Trinity Under-14s in the final of the Catherine Oldfield Trophy. Catherine Oldfield was our manager's mother, so in the competition's inaugural year her trophy should really have been ours.

Sadly, my mistake gave Amber United a 1-0 victory. A cross drifted into the area and I assumed the expression and aspect to which I was all too prone – apparent nonchalance, feet rooted to the spot – as the ball slid past me to their cen-

tre-forward, who did what he had to do. Our goalkeeper, Martin Hodge, who later played in an FA Cup semi-final for Sheffield Wednesday, screamed at me, as he often did. Even my mum berated me afterwards.

As we milled with our medals in front of the main stand (all right, the stand), Southport's manager, Alex Parker, slipped on the pitch. He took my medal and smiled a little wistfully. I thought he was sad for me at only getting a runners-up medal. The next day I found out he had just been sacked.

All this came flooding back during Southport's brief but eventful appearance in I Dreamed I Won The FA Cup

(ITV), which purloined the old idea of taking a match from the first qualifying round and following the winners of each tie through to the final. It was odd that, having decided to do that, they then broke their own rule, following the Kingstonian v Wivenhoe Town tie of the Ryman League Second Division, he slipped into uncannily accurate John Motson impersonations from the stand – "Oh goodness me, what a fine save that was!" he exclaimed at one point.

The next touch of local colour was added by Jack Carr, Southport's president. He could be played to telling effect

in this nature, it was one or two oddballs, and I Dreamed... duly delivered, serving up Timothy Wells, a perfect Mike Leigh character. He proudly displayed his magnum opus, Kingstonian's complete game-by-game, player-by-player record. "It took me nine months to do this, and it felt like a woman having a baby," he said. As his side entertained Wivenhoe Town of the Ryman League Second Division, he slipped into uncannily accurate John Motson impersonations from the stand – "Oh goodness me, what a fine save that was!" he exclaimed at one point.

The next touch of local colour was added by Jack Carr, Southport's president. He could be played to telling effect

by Warren Clarke, who makes a speciality out of muck-and-brass football men, in a script by David Storey or Alan Sillitoe. Carr, who has a construction company and plays "Onward Christian Soldiers" on his car stereo, fitted perfectly the archetype of the northern self-made chairman who has been around since professionalism got going.

A victory over North Ferriby (the chant from the visitors' end "North Ferriby barny army" had a quaint ring to it) earned Southport a first round tie against York City of the Second Division, but it all went horribly wrong at Haig Avenue. Four goals, all scored by York, two sendings-off, both Southport players; and a vigilante

attack on the referee. We're hard in Southport. Sometimes we go out without our coats. Inter-cut were scenes from a year in the life of the Cup as it was chaperoned round the country by Laurie Good. "I had a relationship for four years," he said. "That has now ceased to exist. She said I loved the Cup more than I loved her." His smile suggested that she was probably right.

One of his less enjoyable assignments must have been minding the Cup while the Blairs poked around inside it. "What are we supposed to put in this?" asked Cherie. "Tea?" I guess that was what passes for humour in the brave New Labour world of empty, mile-wide grins.

A man with a smile almost as big is Chris Evans – but then you would be happy going off to Florida to have golf lessons from David Leadbetter for Tee Time (Channel 4). It was difficult to know what it was there for. Is it a travelogue? It told you little about Florida. A sports programme? Golfers would have gleaned little of use, given that the Great Golf Guru's principal contribution to Evans's game was to fit him up with a device for his arm that resembled Robert De Niro's gun contraption in *Taxi Driver*.

There was one tip, though, if you ever play golf in Florida: don't feed the alligators. That must rate as the most unnecessary advice anyone has ever received.



Mountains' mental maze

AT the start of the Lowe Alpine Western Isles Challenge last week, 24 kayaks left the isle of Barra to cross to South Uist, the next island north. On a stormy morning, rain squalls swept between the mountainous islands, catching the paddlers in open water. The rising wind drove them off course, waves broke over the tiny, struggling craft, and fast rescue boats assisted those who capsized in the turbulent, freezing waters. Three were pulled from the water and the rest made it ashore.

For most this would be excitement enough, but this was just the start of one of the world's great adventure races, involving three days of kayaking, mountain running and cycling, on a race through the Outer Hebrides, taking in the summits of 13 mountains along the way. To reach the finish at the Butt of Lewis lighthouse 200

miles away, would require 50 miles of paddling and climbing 20,000 feet.

In total 18 teams of four set off carrying a kilt pin as a baton, and adding small squares of tartan tweed to it at each checkpoint. The other six competitors climbed out of their boats and onto bikes for the individual category, which is only a little shorter than the full race.

As showers chased rainbows around the skies, cyclists and runners made their way up the coastal dunes and on to the first of the big mountains of the day, Beinn Mhor.

In the constant cold wind that sweeps the islands, they raced over deep, demoralising miles of bog, described by Ross Muuro of the appropriately named "Bogstormers" as "like running across miles of sponges". Soon

runners were climbing Eaval, a mountain rising abruptly from sea level, reached by picking a way through a complex maze of lochs.

Back at sea level most teams used bikes to move to the next canoe leg, but Mark Seddon, of Team Lowe Alpine, took the di-

rect route by swimming a tidal loch. At the end of the day everyone took the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry to move on to South Harris, the next link in the island chain, with the exception of a team of Royal Marines. A day that began with their paddler being rescued, ended with

them unable to keep up and missing the boat.

At the cycling start on day two, half the teams set off early, and half the other, as the route to the checkpoints was left open. It is this that inspires the race organiser, Ian Callaghan, a hotelier on Harris, to devise ever more complex courses.

"It is the mental aspect of the race that really appeals to me", he said. "Teams need to work together on detailed logistical planning, have exceptional navigation skills, and incredible endurance and sporting expertise to complete the challenge."

The weather is part of the test and heavy cloud and snow flurries on Clisham, the highest peak in the isles, and one with precipitous cliffs, was to give Callaghan a few troubled hours, as lost teams failed to find radio checkpoints. Eventually they turned up and continued on to the finish on the isle of Great Bernera, from where day three began with the canoeists setting off for the standing stones at Callanish on Lewis.

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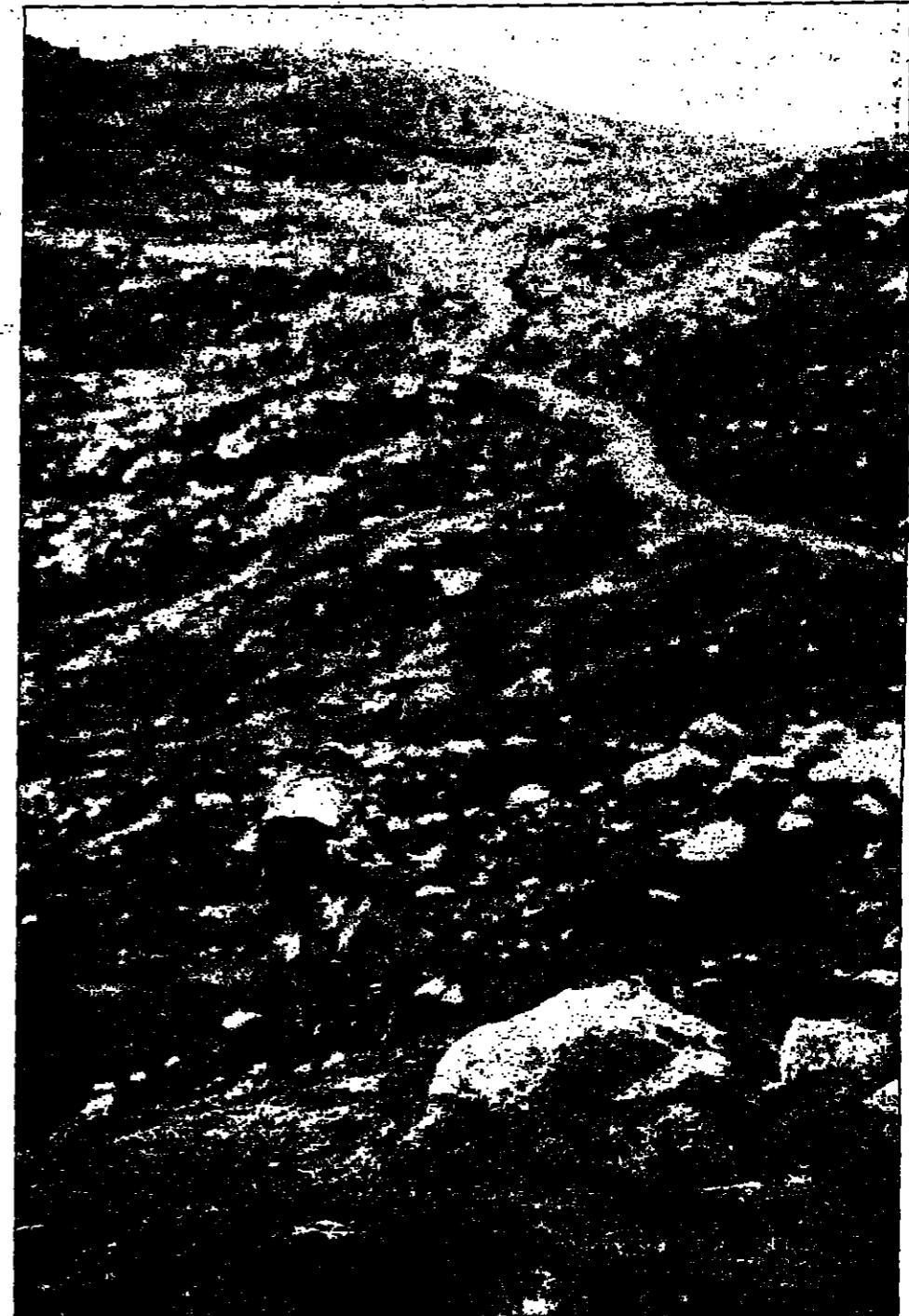
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miles per hour,

despite their aching legs, then the paddlers took over again in strong cross winds and a powerful surf, before setting runners off for the last checkpoint, set in the middle of miles of treacherous bog. Then it was the cyclists again for the glory leg to the welcoming beacon of the lighthouse, perched on cliff tops at the very north-west edge of Europe.

First to arrive was Marc Laithwaite, a sports science teacher at St Helens College, and the individual winner in a total time of 24 hours 19 minutes. The winning team was Sula Sgeir.

WORDS AND
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY ROB HOWARD



Clockwise from top: the exhilarating descent from the summit of Eaval on North Uist; the mountain bike time trial in Lewis provides another challenge on day three; the tension of the handover from canoeist to cyclist is clear on Coll Sands, Lewis; in support, Fiona Young and canine companion wait for the individual winner, Marc Laithwaite, ready for the next changeover; Team Lowe Life show their delight in finishing at the Butt of Lewis lighthouse; the memorable image of a dawn handover on the beach at Ludag, South Uist, after the first canoe section.

Brooke

Woodwar

Minkies

ANNALESA
BARBIERI

ON FISHING

Islander Lam finds a suitable climate on the Tyne



Chris Hewett meets Newcastle's superlative Samoan flanker, whose abundant rugby union talents have proved crucial to the Falcons' Premiership campaign

THREE years ago, we had no one much to play against and nowhere to turn; we were losing players left, right and centre, rugby league was aggressively coaching our best talent and the future looked barren. Thankfully, professionalism has changed everything. We are strong again. We can compete."

Pat Lam was talking about the changing fortunes of Western Samoa, but he might just as easily have been discussing the 15-man revolution in the distinctly untroubled union outpost of Newcastle.

The *ancien régime* of the English game, Bath and Leicester, were consigned to the tummels weeks ago and, tomorrow, the 29-year-old flanker will attempt to legitimise the Geordie resurrection by inflicting a swift guillotine job on Harlequins, those notoriously fickle aristos with one foot in the Twickenham establishment and the other in the Stock Exchange.

It is no coincidence that both Newcastle and the Samoans, who are relishing a shot at the old guard in next year's World Cup, point to Lam's demonic energy as a primary source of inspiration.

By common consent, he is the player of this inaugural Premiership campaign: no mean accolade when you consider the impacts of Lynch and Pienaar, Back and Stranksy, Lyle and Perry. "Pat has been phenomenal all season," says Rob Andrew, the Falcons' director of rugby, of his single most influential lieutenant. "He gives us such a cutting edge. If

our tight forwards do their job – and they've done it fantastically well, by and large – he roams the paddock and causes mayhem." Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, is equally reverent. "I've nothing but respect for the guy," he coozes.

You will not hear Lam shouting such odds on his own behalf, though. If ever there was a silent rugby assassin, the eternally modest Samoan fits the bill: he goes about his business quickly, decisively and without fuss, his athletic prow transporting him smoothly to the most distant corners of the pitch, the furthest-flung theatres of combat. Yet he seldom betrays signs of the wear and tear common to his trade; indeed, he barely breaks sweat. Like Muhammad Ali before him, he has mastered the knack of emerging from battle with the unblushing features of a pacifist.

"We've had our problems in London this season," he says, assessing the finale with Quins in the light of defeats at Saracens, Richmond and Wasps. "But it will be different this time. I feel it's a cup final for us, isn't it? We can see the light at the end of a long, long tunnel and we'll be right up for the contest. We all consider this to be the culmination of two years work; it's been a long process and we know how much it would hurt us to let it slip now."

"When I arrived at Newcastle in February of last year, there was a great deal of ambition but very little confidence. I remember playing Leicester in the

Brooke determined to upset Geordie applecart

By Chris Hewett

PERVERSE game, rugby. Harlequins have spent the last eight and a half months as a side issue, an optional extra, the Allied Dunbar Premiership's equivalent of Shakespeare's third spear carrier. Very occasional good days – Heineken Cup wins in Bourgoin and Cardiff and a 50-point league victory over Wasps – have been eclipsed by cock-ups against Bristol and London Irish. They are the Charles Hawtrey's of the English game; sometimes inspired, but desperately fragile.

Yet the Londoners have it in their power to deny the mean

machine from Newcastle their ultimate prize at a sell-out Stoop Memorial Ground tomorrow and rumour has it that they are deadly serious about upsetting the Geordie applecart. Certainly, Zinzan Brooke, the All Black legend who took possession of the Harlequins poisoned chalice a couple of months ago, made an early motivational pitch yesterday.

"The players need to show the right attitude, plenty of commitment and stop talking about where they are going for their summer holidays," said the new coach. For those in need of a rough translation, he meant: "Front up, or you'll all be on one

long holiday." As Brooke knows from his rich experience of the New Zealand dressing-room, the threat of a week's notice tends to have a cathartic effect on a slovenly workforce.

On the face of it, the Geordies possess more than enough know-how to chisel out the single point they require to repel Saracens' compelling stab at the double. Their form has been none too impressive since back-to-back reverses in the capital last month but they successfully picked a route through the intensely physical ambushes laid by Leicester and Bath, and as Rob Andrew, their director of rugby, said yesterday:

"To make matters ntier still, Newcastle go in without Dean Ryan, their No 8, captain and enforcer-in-chief. Ryan was so comprehensively concussed in last Monday's bone-split-

"Another nightmare in London is not on the agenda."

Andrew is on edge, though. He knows Harlequins of old and is suspicious of their capricious, fly-by-night habits. Newcastle have been mightily effective all season, but their all-round pace is suspect. Harlequins are the quickest side in England. Jamie Williams, Dan Luger, Darren O'Leary, even Laurent Cabannes, are as fast as you like and possibly lethal in open field.

To make matters ntier still, Newcastle go in without Dean Ryan, their No 8, captain and enforcer-in-chief. Ryan was so comprehensively concussed in last Monday's bone-split-

ting collision with Bath that he disappeared with the fairies – it took a phalanx of medics with first-hand knowledge of the martial arts to dissuade him from returning to the pitch – and although Peter Walton has performed influentially of late, the main man will be sorely missed.

Down in the Premiership basement, Bristol and London Irish are feeling every bit as neurotic. Bristol go into tomorrow afternoon's opening play-off leg at London Scottish without their sole England tourist, Josh Lewsey and, judging by the walls of anguish at the Memorial Ground yesterday, they are none too pleased with their boy

wonder. Listed to start on the bench, the 21-year-old back decided to give the game a wide berth in order to concentrate on his physiology studies.

"I've given everything to rugby for the last two years and when I put last season's play-offs before my academic commitments, I did very badly in my exams," he explained. Bristol's claim that he is in contravention of his contract will not cost him too much sleep; Lewsey has been unsettled for months and intends to move clubs at the end of the season. Sale are favourites for his signature.

London Irish, meanwhile, field a shadow side against

Leicester at Sunbury tomorrow; their big guns are saving themselves for the might of Rotherham, whom they confront in the first leg of a play-off in Yorkshire on Wednesday night. Gabriel Fulcher, the Irish international second row squeezed out of the Exiles' first-choice line-up by Nick Harvey and Malcolm O'Kelly, captains the also-rans.

In Wales, Swansea require one point from tonight's game at Pontypridd to deny Cardiff's late surge and claim the Premiership title. The All Whites can even afford to lose, provided they score three tries and collect the requisite bonus.

In total, 27 Chinese swimmers have tested positive to doping tests in the last decade, with seven testing positive to the steroid dehydrotestosterone at the 1994 Asian Games in Japan.

The CSA proposed an 11-point action plan to stamp out drug abuse after Australia. In addition, all swimmers will have to put their winnings into a bank account that will only be accessible when they retire and if they have a clean doping slate.

Woodward courting Ashton for perfect union on summer tour

THE coaching careers of Clive Woodward and Brian Ashton are about to become entwined once more, if the usually reliable Twickenham bush telegraph is anything to go by, writes Chris Hewett.

Woodward, the England coach, wants Ashton, formerly of Bath and Ireland, to join his backroom panel for the summer

tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and, while the Rugby Football Union would not comment on the status of a backs specialist, Ashton's appointment would complete the circle admirably.

"Clive is quite keen for me to get involved," acknowledged Ashton, who resigned his coaching role with Ireland in February after disagreements with the

stand, his coaching staff for the tour are John Mitchell, Phil Lander and Dave Aired, none of them a backs specialist. Ashton's appointment would complete the circle admirably.

Ashton was among the coaches when England last travelled to New Zealand in 1983 and Jack Rowell, Woodward's predecessor as national coach and a long-time colleague at

Bath, attempted to lure him on board before last season's Five Nations Championship, but was embarrassingly beaten to the punch by the Irish.

The end of season transfer merry-go-round was working overtime yesterday. Sale completed the signing of the former Wigan and Great Britain rugby league centre Barrie-Jon

Mather while preparing to off-load Simon Mannix, the All Black stand-off, from Gloucester.

Bath are courting Malcolm O'Kelly, the London Irish lock, and could soon dispense with their two Argentine players, Federico Mendez and German Llanas, while at Northampton there are rumours that their

Scotland and Lions stand-off, Gregor Townsend, may move to Brive, in France.

Blackheath have gone into liquidation. The club, founded in 1858, has called in the receivers following a failed attempt to raise £1m to finance a proposed alliance with Auckland, the New Zealand provincial side.

Minkies, buzzers and savage casts the choice for reservoir rods



ANNALISA BARBIERI
ON
FISHING

HAVING confessed, three weeks ago, that reservoirs put the very fear of God into me, I decided to visit the biggest of them all: Rutland Water in Oakham, Leicestershire – 3,100 acres and 17 miles of fishing bank. Big. So big that one to a boat is forbidden as it is deemed too dangerous – you have to take a companion. Hambleton, scene of some pretty horrific murders a few years ago, sits in the middle so that the reservoir has two "arms" to it. Later this year Rutland will host the House of Hardy Flyfishing International Championship (the final is 14 to 17 September); 19 July sees the England Youth Championship taking place there and on the same day there is the International Championship for the Disabled.

Rutland was pretty and so vast that it could not be scary, it just looked too natural and it is the synthetic aura of reser-

voir that I find disconcerting. The Lodge at Rutland is big and well equipped, but a little impersonal. A nice log fire, a cigar humidor and a few leather armchairs would not have gone amiss, something like the facilities at Roger Daltrey's fishery, Lakewood, at Burwash. Downstairs from the eating area was the fantastically stocked tackle shop where I got stuck to a helpful chap who was obviously fascinated (in the way that some folk are) that I should voluntarily choose to fish, being a woman and all. He told me that when he first fished at Rutland, he did not catch anything for weeks because he was too proud to ask for help with lines and flies to use. But when he eventually did ask someone, he started hooking fish. This seemed like a ridiculous waste of time: I always go straight in and ask loads of questions.

It was a freezing cold day

and I decided to accompany my friend Nicki in a casting lesson under the auspices of warden Nigel Savage. But Nigel proved to be anything but. He took Nicki and I on to a large piece of grass and, tying wool on the ends of our lines, we started casting under his expert tutition. I had been there many times before – casting bits of wool on grass but I always think you can't have too many casting lessons. For an hour I diligently perfected my overhead cast while rain and wind and sleet lashed my face (despite being clad in Clinique's Weather The Elements environmental cream, which I thoroughly recommend to avoid that slapped in the face look that nature can give you). Nigel was too macho to take up the offer of a blob of cream, preferring to go for the "Rutland Blush" instead. But after 90 minutes I had to go for hot chocolate as I was bored with wool. In the

Lodge we discussed how to keep your hands warm when you fish (Patagonia bunting gloves) and why Wellington boots. But Nigel proved to be anything but. He took Nicki and I on to a large piece of grass and, tying wool on the ends of our lines, we started casting under his expert tutition. I had been there many times before – casting bits of wool on grass but I always think you can't have too many casting lessons. For an hour I diligently perfected my overhead cast while rain and wind and sleet lashed my face (despite being clad in Clinique's Weather The Elements environmental cream, which I thoroughly recommend to avoid that slapped in the face look that nature can give you). Nigel was too macho to take up the offer of a blob of cream, preferring to go for the "Rutland Blush" instead. But after 90 minutes I had to go for hot chocolate as I was bored with wool. In the

brownies. It had gone, he told us, to a Minkie on a size 12 hook, so called because it used to be made of mink. This is quite a queer little fly, big and uncouth out of the water, but with a fair old wiggle about it once submerged. Minkies are well used in Rutland, especially in the spring when fish are feeding on fry. We had barely settled in when Pete, the bastard, hooked another fish. This time a rainbow on a tungsten Viva, size 12 hook.

After netting the rainbow, Pete gave his golden spot to Nicki, who had never caught a fish before. We fished quietly for a while until 20 feet up the bank, I saw Nicki's line go tight. She had a fish on, her first. I was hooked on the bottom and was desperately trying to get free so I could join in her moment of glory, but sadly, she lost it. Joyously however, just five minutes later, her line tightened again and this time

Nigel took us to our last beat of the day, at Barnsdale Creek. Alan gave me the smallest bottle of whisky in the world (a doll's house size) as a consolation prize for having forgotten my hip flask that I usually keep full to bursting with some nice malt. On this stretch, Nigel diligently alternated my leaden buzzers with a Minkie. I got two glorious pulls but alas I was too slow to hook them. I had to content myself with the memory of the near-takes, which I mentally replayed over and over and over in the sad way that fishermen do. We ended the day at six, everyone but me with Rutland Blush.

Orvis are having a rod demonstration today at Syon Park Fishery, Brentford, from 10am where you will be able to try out new rods, see new products and have expert casting instruction.

Rutland Water Reservoir: 0116 388441
Syon Park Fishery: 0181 454 2600



Reid at head of Nissan charge

Motor racing

NISSAN dominated official testing at Brands Hatch ahead of the next two rounds of the British Touring Car Championship over the weekend.

Three of the team's Primera GTs were in the top five, with Anthony Reid heading the pack in a time of 44.531 seconds, just inside the Kent track's qualifying record.

"I was fastest in official testing at Donington, but it didn't happen for me there in the race," Reid said. "What we have learned is that the car is very well balanced."

Volvo's Rickard Rydell ran Reid the closest, while the championship leader, James Thompson, was third fastest in his Honda. An impressive fourth was Matt Neal, Nissan's runner in the Autosport Cup for Independents, with David Leslie in the works Primera completing the top five.

The Renault team suffered several problems, among them a lack of grip, as Jason Plato was seventh after two off-track excursions and the reigning champion, Alain Menu, finished 10th fastest.

The former Formula One world champion, Nigel Mansell, testing for Ford ahead of his British Touring Car Championship debut next month, was plagued by mechanical problems with his new Mondeo and could only record a best time of 45.807sec.

China unveils life ban for steroid abuse

Boxing

THE Chinese Swimming Association has announced it is to impose a lifetime ban on swimmers – including first time offenders – caught using steroids.

Wu Shouzhang, CSA official and vice-president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, told an anti-doping conference: "We deeply regretted the series of shameful drug scandals in the 1994 Asian Games and the World Swimming Championships in Perth. The CSA plans to increase the number of drug tests this year to 600 and impose more severe sanctions."

Four Chinese swimmers were found to have taken the illegal diuretic Triamterene, a masking agent for anabolic steroid use, and banned from participating in the championships in January. The All Whites can even afford to lose, provided they score three tries and collect the requisite bonus.

In total, 27 Chinese swimmers have tested positive to doping tests in the last decade, with seven testing positive to the steroid dehydrotestosterone at the 1994 Asian Games in Japan.

The CSA proposed an 11-point action plan to stamp out drug abuse after Australia. In addition, all swimmers will have to put their winnings into a bank account that will only be accessible when they retire and if they have a clean doping slate.

Lane delves into the past to rediscover his putting edge

Golf

By Andy Farwell
at The Oxfordshire

WHEN Rees Jones, the noted American golf course architect and the son of a master of the profession, designed his course at The Oxfordshire, he had in mind the sort of beautiful summer's day that we were blessed with yesterday.

The layout, bringing into play some huge irrigation lakes, would not look out of place in Florida but the exposed nature

of the land led Jones to incorporate a links feel to his design. The eclectic mix is not to everyone's taste. What most agree on is the need to have the sun on your back to play the course.

Jones was perhaps optimistic about how often the ideal conditions are presented in Thame and competitors in the Benson and Hedges International tournaments played here certainly had not encountered them until yesterday. It was a day to put joy into the heart of any golfer and Barry Lane had particular reason to be happy.

Lane has not made a cut since the Lancome Trophy last September. The only time the former Ryder Cup player has played during the weekend in his six previous tournaments this year has been when play has overrun from the first two days. Following Thursday morning's delay due to thunderstorms, the second round here will not be completed until this morning, but Lane was safely in the clubhouse yesterday with a 36-hole score of nine under par. He held a one-shot lead over Philip Price and a two-stroke advantage over

Colin Montgomerie and Norway's Per Haugrud.

On Thursday Lane could not tee off until 7.30pm and had time to go to the DIY shop with his French fiancée, Stéphanie, and paint the bathroom in their new house in Wokingham. Yesterday he completed a 69 in his first round and then went straight out and scored a six-under 66. Stéphanie is not a golfer, but suggested Lane take up a wider stance while putting. "When I went back to some old videos, that's exactly how I used to putt," he said.

A slight grip change completed a return to his previous style and a trip down memory lane followed. Of his nine birdies, three came at short holes, including the fifth where he holed from 45 feet. "I putted well and that's the thing that has been missing," Lane said. "I must have been averaging 34 to 35 puts a round before this week."

Three of Lane's four European Tour victories came in three years from 1992. In 1993 he earned his place at The Belfry in the Ryder Cup. A miserable collapse in his singles

against Chip Beck - as America retained the cup - did not seem to affect him. In 1995 he won the Andersen Consulting World Championship, the European qualifier, having been

played at The Oxfordshire, and collected the \$1m first prize.

Immediately, coincidentally or not, Lane's form disappeared, finishing 76th and 83rd on the money list in the last two years. "I never lost the desire to win and playing golf never stopped being fun," said the 37-year-old. "But it's frustrating. You lose confidence and get

negative. You start to wonder if it will ever come back."

Montgomerie never feared his four-week break would affect his form and only one missed fairway in two rounds was the key to his threatening position on the leaderboard. "I suppose I have got to be happy with seven under," Monty said. "It gives me another - yet another - chance to win this tournament."

Jamie Spence, however, had mixed feelings about reaching five under par. This particular Arsenal fan's Cup final ticket will go begging, a double dis-

appointment since his team's Premiership-clinching game against Everton coincided with another of his rare weekend appearances on the golf course.

BENSON AND HEDGES INTERNATIONAL OPEN (The Colodrake GC, Thame) Leaderboard first-round scores (18 or 19 holes) 1: G. Lane 66; 2: D. Lane 67; 3: C. Montgomerie 68; 4: F. Lane 69; 5: G. Evans 69; 6: M. Poulter 69; 7: S. Dring 70; 8: P. Attwells 71; 9: T. Bjorn 72; 10: B. Davis 73; 11: D. Lynn 74; 12: A. Sherborne 75; 13: P. McIlroy 76; 14: M. Hallberg (Swe) 76; 15: P. McGinley 77; 16: S. Lunn (Eng); 17: R. Clayton 78; 18: C. Palmer 79; 19: J. Haas 79; 20: P. Marshall (Ned); 21: S. Goss 80; 22: C. Maitre 81; 23: P. Curri 82; 24: S. Sanderson 82; 25: N. Jenkins 83; 26: W. Weetman (SA) 84; 27: M. Gates 85; 28: J. Lomas 86; 29: P. Johnson (Swe) 86; 30: D. Leytey (Aus); 31: D. Curley 88; 32: G. Brand 89; 33: C. Sheldrick 89; 34: R. Davies 90; 35: M. Morrison 90; 36: S. Smith 91; 37: P. Hanson 92; 38: J. Smith 93; 39: S. Kieffer (Den); 40: J. Spencer 94; 41: M. Mclaren.

Players content to keep off the grass

Tennis

By John Roberts
in Rome

SUDDEN gusts brought clouds over the Foro Italico. The steamy temperatures dropped, and the Italian Open experienced its first deluge of the week. Yesterday's rain somehow seemed to symbolise the customary clay-court conspiracy against Wimbledon, coinciding as it did with the list of entries - and absences - for the championships in June.

Eight names are missing, including those of two former champions, the semi-retired Boris Becker, who may ask for a wild card, and his German compatriot Michael Stich, whose retirement seems permanent.

Two former French Open champions, Sergi Bruguera and Thomas Muster, head the drop-outs. Bruguera, from Spain, has not appeared at the All England Club since 1994, when he featured in a classic contest against Australia's Pat Rafter. Muster, the Austrian former world No 1, has also been missing since 1994, sometimes controversially, and has failed to win a match in four appearances.

Carlos Costa, of Spain, who demonstrated his clay-court skills by eliminating Michael Chang in the quarter-finals yesterday, 6-2, 6-1, has not advanced beyond the second round at Wimbledon in five visits. He opts out along with the Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, a first-round loser on three occasions, and the Brazilian Fernando Meligeni, who failed to win a match on his only visit in 1994.

Alberto Berasategui's name leapt out of the list of entries until the Spaniard completed a rain-interrupted quarter-final victory against the New Zealander Brett Steven, 6-4, 6-2, and pointed out that his inclusion was an error. "Someone made a mistake and put me in the tournament, and I am not in the tournament," the Spaniard said. "Maybe next year." Berasategui has never played at Wimbledon and lost his only match on a grass-court, in Halle, Germany. He plays Costa in today's semi-finals.

"I think we should all go to

Wimbledon," Berasategui said, "and I think the rule is going to change for 2000. But until the rule changes I prefer to play on clay, where I make most of my points. My game isn't suited to grass. Before I go to Wimbledon, I want to be able to play the grass-court tournaments leading up to it." The rule change to which Berasategui refers is a plan to dock ranking points from players who fail to play in any of the four Grand Slams.

Gustavo Kuerten, the reigning French Open champion, intends to return to Wimbledon, where he lost in the first round last year, though he joked that he was going back to Brazil "probably in the second week of Wimbledon".

Kuerten, who advanced to today's semi-finals here with a 6-3, 6-4 win against Fernando Vicente, a Spanish qualifier, took time earlier in the week to pay his respects to AS Roma's Brazilian footballers, Cafu, Aldair, Paulo Sergio and Antonio Carlos, at the club's training ground.

He was amused to hear that when Ronaldo met the Pope, the Pope did not recognise the Brazilian striker. "It was a strange situation for Ronaldo," Kuerten said. "He probably met the only person who doesn't know him, but it's the way it is."

Kuerten is superstitious about returning to Paris to defend his title. "I'll stay in the same hotel, probably eat at the same restaurants, hopefully practise on the same courts, drink the same water and take showers in the same showers."

On this occasion, however, his outfit for Stade Roland Garros will be... well, if not exactly subdued, slightly toned down from the yellow and blue (shoes and all) creations he wore last year, prompting the President of the French Tennis Federation Christian Simon to comment, "We don't want these guys dressing like soccer players."

Kuerten intends to wear yellow shirts with black or blue shorts, but the bright blue shoes are out. "I have to change the way I dress, so if I don't win, that will be the reason!"

Hingis, the world's No 1



Anna Kournikova plays a backhand during her straight-sets win over Martina Hingis in Berlin yesterday. Photograph: AP

Kournikova finally overcomes Hingis

ANNA KOURNIKOVA picked up the biggest win of her career yesterday when she beat the top-seeded Martina Hingis in two hard-fought sets in the quarter-finals of the German Open in Berlin yesterday.

Kournikova, whose spectacular game has led some to believe she could one day become the world No 1, let three match points slip away before beating Hingis, 6-3, 7-6.

"I've been praying this win would come," Kournikova said. "I'm just very very happy."

Hingis, the world's No 1

player, had knocked the 16-year-old Russian out of three of the past four Grand Slam events, losing just one set in their four previous meetings.

Jana Novotna, the third seed, also advanced into the semi-finals with a 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 win against Romania's Irina Spirlea. She will face the 18-year-old French qualifier Amelie Mauresmo, who beat Austria's Barbara Paulus, 6-4, 6-2.

Earlier, Hingis had dismissed the idea that Kournikova was another emerging rival for her No 1 status. "I know she

can play, but she's never shown it against me," Hingis said. "She was always too nervous."

Kournikova has risen from the No 32 in the world to No 16 this year, beating four top 10 players at the Lipton Championships to reach her first final. But the Russian's path to the top has often been blocked by Hingis.

But this time Kournikova was prepared against the Swiss player, using her power to decide between spectacular rallies. "I didn't really think about who was on the other side of the net," said Kournikova. "I just

played my game. I think she was surprised by that."

Hingis slumped off the loss just two weeks before the French Open. "It's nothing to cry about. I'll be ready for the French Open," she said.

• Monica Seles' father, Karoly, has died following a long battle against cancer at the age of 64. Of Hungarian origin but from the Yugoslav town of Uvvidek, he worked as a caricaturist before guiding his daughter's career. The family moved to the United States in the late 1980s.

Slow burn by Bulls enough for Elliott

Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

MATTHEW ELLIOTT is not unhappy that his Bradford Bulls side are only slowly working their way into the sort of form that won the Super League championship last season.

If Bradford are only gradually coming to terms with the welcome fact that more teams can stand up to them physically, then Elliott will counter with the old sporting truism that they are engaged in a marathon rather than a sprint.

"I'm delighted that we are working towards playing really well by the end of the season," he said.

"We've slightly changed the core of the team and my expectations for it to click straightaway were probably a bit misguided."

Those changes started to look promising against St Helens last Sunday, however, with Steve McNamara and this season's newcomer, Shaun Edwards, controlling matters in the middle of the field, and Robbie Paul and Graeme Bradley getting into wider positions to considerable effect.

One player from whom Elliott has got an instant pay-off is Tevita Vaikona, his winter signing from Hull. He has been a regular try-scorer and leads the way in the whole of Super League in the more esoteric statistic of yards gained.

"There's still a lot of improvement left in him," said Elliott. "We just have to find other ways of getting him more involved. He's an outstanding player - world class."

Bradford, who might have

Stuart Spruce returning at full-back after a back injury, despite the fine job that Nathan Graham did in his place against St Helens, face a Halifax team tomorrow night who have had an interesting week to say the least.

John Pendlebury resigned as coach on Wednesday night, only to be persuaded back into the fold 24 hours later.

His point - a valid one - was that there is little advantage in him getting the players to work together if the board cannot do the same.

With Karl Harrison clear

from the threat of suspension to lead from the front, Halifax players will be trying to give Pendlebury their own vote of confidence tomorrow but the way they have had hardly counts as ideal preparation.

The side that Elliott - and virtually everyone else - expects to improve dramatically as the season moves towards its climactic play-offs are the London Broncos. They need to - with only one win from five matches they are not far from losing touch, although they should recoup some ground at Huddersfield whose coach, Gary Schofield, was frankly disgusted with them after their fifth loss in a row at Salford last week.

The same proviso, about the danger of losing touch, applies to Sheffield, who are at Sal-

ford. Warrington will be keen to show that their first win of the season, against Halifax last week, was no blip on the screen. They have Jon Roper free to play despite his sending-off in that game, and Castleford can expect a similarly robust welcome to Wilderspool.

Scan leaves Jones' future in limbo

Boxing

By David Field

IT should have been the biggest night in Barry Jones' fighting life. Top billing on Sky television in the first defence of his World Boxing Organisation title in Paris for a purse of £60,000. But then the results of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan knocked out that rich prospect, as they proved unsatisfactory.

The Cardiff super-featherweight was sadly withdrawn from the fight against the Frenchman, Julien Longy, and his career is now in limbo while he awaits a second opinion from the medics.

The exclusion of Jones gave Antrim's Mark Winters the opportunity to take over the TV spot in his bid to win a Lonsdale Belt outright at York Hall, Bethnal Green, tonight.

Jones said: "From an utterly selfish point of view, Spencer Oliver's situation last week is not the best thing that could have

happened to me. It's great that he's making a full recovery, but again it is going to put enormous pressure on doctors and the Board. Under the present climate I can't see anyone being too keen to give me the green light."

Sky relocated their operation from the Bercy area of Paris to London's East End, the neighbourhood of Winters'. British light-welterweight title challenger, 27-year-old Jason Rowland, was disappointed.

Winters won the vacant title in an ill-fated fight against Carl Wright in Sheffield last October, after which the Liverpool fighter underwent brain surgery, but is happily making a full recovery.

Roland, defeated just once in 22 fights, will be relying on his job to match Winters' high work rate, but the 1994 Commonwealth Games silver-medallist's industry should be rewarded with a points verdict - and the coveted Lonsdale belt.

Doohan back in business

Motorcycling

AMERICA'S John Kocinski and Brazil's Alex Barros completed a top-four finish by Honda.

Max Biaggi's best lap of 1:55.227 only took him up to seventh. Biaggi, a four-time world 250cc champion who is making his debut in the grand-prix class this season, had got off to a sensational start, riding his Honda to one victory, a second and a third place to lead Doohan by 12 points in the standings.

Singleton sets the trend

Judo

By Nicola Fairbrother
in Oviedo

IT often happens in sport, when you start winning it soon becomes a habit. It is an infectious thing as the British team are finding at the European Championships here in Spain. Yesterday, the victories kept coming with four more British fighters easing through their first-round encounters.

On Thursday, Kate Howey, Chloe Cowen and Karina Bryant all made the semi-finals. Given their experience, it was

to be expected. Then came the turn of the younger fighters. First to make it through was the 20-year-old Georgina Singleton, who had wins over Victoria Volotova, of Russia, and Elena Kariskai, of Belarus. Singleton has the added bonus of knowing that the Olympic and world champion, Marie Claire Restoux, has already been put out of the running for the gold medal after surprisingly losing her first match. It has left the division wide open.

Debbie Allen became the fourth British finalist of the day as two strange wins took her past Dragana Zivkovic, of Yugoslavia and the Russian Olga Seddosojevic, and then a speedy *tai-otsu* wiped out the Dutch girl Deborah Gravenstijn.

Lee Burbridge and Graeme Randall lost out at the quarter-final stage, but are still in the hunt for bronze. All must now wait until tomorrow for the medal contests.

Showtime returns in style

Equestrianism

By Genevieve Murphy at Windsor

NICK SKELTON gained his second victory of the Royal Windsor Horse Show when he rode his Olympic mount, Virtual Village Showtime, to win yesterday's Traxdata Great Park Stakes. The Olympics, according to Skelton, "set the mare back a bit," but she has found a new lease of life after a few months out in the field.

"She's fast and careful, when you put her down a level there's no better horse," Skelton said, after defeating Germany's Heinrich-Hermann Engemann by the convincing margin of 4.96sec.

He will not attempt to put Showtime back up to a higher level again by aiming her at this year's World Equestrian Games in Italy, but he will be competing with a team of four horses in future contests this year.

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All-round change as England ponder specialists

By Derek Pringle
Cricket Correspondent

In their bid to find the best 15 players for next year's World Cup, England's selectors are likely to shift away from the all-rounders rich selections of recent sides. With defeat in the West Indies following the successes in Sharjah, David Graveney and his panel see it as their duty to explore different permutations, and see next week's Texaco matches against South Africa as a necessary part of the learning curve.

New directions do not necessarily mean new players though, and there will almost certainly be recalls for Chris Lewis and Darren Gough. But, if familiar faces abound, there will probably be the odd dropper

of new blood as well, which could mean first time caps for the likes of the Sussex captain, Chris Adams, and Leicestershire's Darren Maddy.

Over the last five years, one-day cricket has been a game in constant flux. At any given moment, there appear to be many solutions, each seductive and perhaps successful in its own way. *Once more*, the trend is for the bits-and-pieces all-rounders, the next for the specialists. What is certain, however, is that there is no absolute right way and what worked like a dream in Sharjah, namely the plethora of tidy medium pace, proved glaringly inadequate in the bouncier pitches of the Caribbean.

Like any winning formula, it is the proportion of the ingre-

dients that is important and Graham Gooch, no doubt sympathising with Adam Hollioake's dilemma in the West Indies, admitted that the selectors would be "looking to give the captain a bit more variation than he had in the West Indies, where all he could do was swap like for like." Hence the need for the bits-and-pieces all-rounders.

Now back to where he started at Leicestershire, after three moves in five years, Lewis is the player many admire but dare not admit their respect. If he is picked, and all the pointers are that he will be, it will be his first game for England since being dropped following the infamous incident during the final Test against Pakistan in 1996 when he blotted his late

arrival at The Oval on a tyre puncture.

Quoted recently, Lewis claims he is now more mature. Which is a bit like Gazzza claiming that after a six-year 20-a-day habit, he only has the occasional puff. Perhaps the one-day captain at Leicestershire has helped focus his undoubted, but all too erratic, talents. If it has, the selectors are right to give him another chance.

Gough's return is more predictable and, apart from the hamstring injury that kept him out last winter, he would have been involved anyway. In any case, he needs all the bowling he can get at the moment in order to find his rhythm. Taking the new ball, with either Dean Headley or Angus Fraser, ought to help brush away any

remaining cobwebs. Other bowlers in the frame and playing well are Chris Silverwood and Ed Giddins, though Giddins' return after an 18-month ban for a positive drugs test may be a leap too far for the selectors at this stage.

Another player virtually certain to return is the slow left-arm Ashley Giles, another missing from the Caribbean because of injury. With Alan Hollioake, Mark Eatham and Matthew Fleming all likely to continue fulfilling the all-round role, providing the pitches are not overly grassed, England may well play both Giles and the off-spinner, Robert Croft. In fact, it was only 10 years ago that the perceived wisdom for 50-over cricket was that you needed less batsmen, not more.

While it is tempting for the present to see the past as a foreign country, the batting line-up is also likely to return to more conventional tactics, with Nick Knight the sole pinch-hitter, probably not a bad thing against the pace of Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock. There could be no place, then, for Ben Hollioake, whose role under his brother has become more confused with the passing of time.

Although there is no doubt that he is worth a place in the squad, Hollioake Jnr is not guaranteed a game and the selectors may feel his time would be better spent playing for his county than carrying the drinks for England.

After the success of Hollioake Jnr's introduction last year, it might seem appropriate

for the selectors to blood another talented youngster, perhaps Lancashire's Andrew Flintoff, a big, muscular batsman who occasionally bowls. However, the problem of where to fit him in again arises and, with Adams, Maddy and Graeme Hick likely to take up two of the five specialist batting slots, Flintoff will probably have to wait a while fused with the passing of time.

For Adams, a ferocious striker, the oft-discussed and long overdue move away from Derbyshire, at the age of 28, looks as if it will have finally paid off. Frustrated by what he saw as a one-eyed approach by the Derby maestro, Adams' move to Sussex has already resulted in two Championship hundreds and a brace of half-centuries in the Benson & Hedges.

ENGLAND (possible one-day squad): A. Flintoff, S. Hick, Adams, Thomas, Middlesex, Eatham, Lewis, Fleming, Gough, Croft, Gidens, Fraser, Headley.

Klusener's day overshadowed by injury to Telemachus

By Derek Pringle
at Worcester
Worcestershire v South Africa

IT WAS the kind of balmy summer day that might have prompted Lou Reed to write "that song" a decade earlier, had he grown up on the banks of the Severn rather than on the Brooklyn side of the East River. Unfortunately, none of the batsmen saw fit to take advantage and it was left to a bowler, Lance Klusener, to steal what thunder there was in the perfect conditions with 4 for 66.

Klusener has few skills, even on a pitch as slow as this one. With an attitude that does not know the meaning of reduced capacity, he simply rolled up his sleeves, bent his back, and put in the work of two men. The dividends were plain to see and while Allan Donald looked sleek but went wicketless — though he did have a catch dropped by Daryl Cullinan at first slip — Klusener hustled his way past early season defences. With a useful yorker to back up a slippery bouncer, he clean bowled both Philip Weston and David Leatherdale, the latter having played the day's best innings.

Klusener also accounted for Graeme Hick, who tamely chipped a slower ball to mid-wicket for 33. It was a sucker dismissal and Hick, looking to judge the selectors as Michael Atherton had done the previous day, should have known better. It was a careless mistake and it probably put paid to the batsman's chances of making England's one-day squad for next week's Texaco matches.

Klusener, now 26, has travelled an interesting route. In an age of academics, it is heartening to learn that someone as talented as Klusener rose to prominence via district cricket in Natal. Like Frank Sinatra, he can probably claim to have done it his way.

Although less successful, his colleagues would have been benefited from their first proper bowl in English conditions, and there were wickets for Paul Adams and Jacques Kallis. Donald looked fluent, if a little frus-

tated by the pedestrian nature of the pitch, while Mornanau Hayward, a fast bowler from Uitenhage, just looked baffled.

A 21-year-old with a mop of fiery red hair, Hayward has apparently been clocked at well over 90 mph. Yesterday, his skiddy pace helped the batsmen time the ball and he was comfortably the most expensive of the visiting bowlers.

Despite Klusener's efforts, probably the most significant event as far as the visitors were concerned happened an hour before the start of play when Roger Telemachus, South Africa's swing bowler and a key part of their one-day side, dislocated his right shoulder.

The injury happened when

Telemachus, diving for a catch in fielding practice, landed awkwardly on his right elbow. Unable to relocate the shoulder, the physio, Craig Smith, took him to hospital where it was put back with the help of a local anaesthetic. The prognosis is that the bowler will be out of action for at least six weeks. The feeling is that he may be better off recovering at home rather than on tour, which means a replacement is almost certain.

With only Steve Rhodes,

unbeaten on 45, coming close to matching Leatherdale's crisp strokeplay, Worcestershire, no doubt having agreed some kind of quasi one-day run chase today, were able to declare on 228 for 6, some 59 runs behind.

In keeping with his decision to bat first on the opening day, Hansie Cronje resisted the temptation to change the batting order. It was a decision that only Gerhardus Liebenberg regretted, when he went for a duck, caught behind off Phil Newport. Gary Kirsten, the one failure in the first innings, followed, though not before he had secured his half-century.

The Australian batsman,

Michael Slater, makes his return to the Derbyshire side in tomorrow's AXA League game against Warwickshire at Derby.

The opener has yet to bat for the county after he broke a bone in his left hand on the first morning of the season.



Allan Donald in full flight for South Africa yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Cricket scoreboard

British Assurance County Championship

Third day of four

Durham v Essex

CHESTER-LE-STREET

Durham won toss

DURHAM — First innings 276 (M A Gough 104, D S Gohar 47)

ESSEX — First innings 185

DURHAM — Second innings

(Overnight: 104 for 3)

M N Speaks c D R Law b D R Law

P D Collingsworth c D R Law b D R Law

M J Foster c S G Law b D R Law

N O Phillips c S G Law b D R Law

M M Butcher c S G Law b D R Law

S J Wood c R Morris b D R Law

Bowling: S Gohar 62, D R Law 10, D S Gohar 42

Total: 404, 5-133, 6-77, 7-175, 8-175, 9-175, 10-175, 11-175, 12-175, 13-175, 14-175, 15-175, 16-175, 17-175, 18-175, 19-175, 20-175, 21-175, 22-175, 23-175, 24-175, 25-175, 26-175, 27-175, 28-175, 29-175, 30-175, 31-175, 32-175, 33-175, 34-175, 35-175, 36-175, 37-175, 38-175, 39-175, 40-175, 41-175, 42-175, 43-175, 44-175, 45-175, 46-175, 47-175, 48-175, 49-175, 50-175, 51-175, 52-175, 53-175, 54-175, 55-175, 56-175, 57-175, 58-175, 59-175, 60-175, 61-175, 62-175, 63-175, 64-175, 65-175, 66-175, 67-175, 68-175, 69-175, 70-175, 71-175, 72-175, 73-175, 74-175, 75-175, 76-175, 77-175, 78-175, 79-175, 80-175, 81-175, 82-175, 83-175, 84-175, 85-175, 86-175, 87-175, 88-175, 89-175, 90-175, 91-175, 92-175, 93-175, 94-175, 95-175, 96-175, 97-175, 98-175, 99-175, 100-175, 101-175, 102-175, 103-175, 104-175, 105-175, 106-175, 107-175, 108-175, 109-175, 110-175, 111-175, 112-175, 113-175, 114-175, 115-175, 116-175, 117-175, 118-175, 119-175, 120-175, 121-175, 122-175, 123-175, 124-175, 125-175, 126-175, 127-175, 128-175, 129-175, 130-175, 131-175, 132-175, 133-175, 134-175, 135-175, 136-175, 137-175, 138-175, 139-175, 140-175, 141-175, 142-175, 143-175, 144-175, 145-175, 146-175, 147-175, 148-175, 149-175, 150-175, 151-175, 152-175, 153-175, 154-175, 155-175, 156-175, 157-175, 158-175, 159-175, 160-175, 161-175, 162-175, 163-175, 164-175, 165-175, 166-175, 167-175, 168-175, 169-175, 170-175, 171-175, 172-175, 173-175, 174-175, 175-175, 176-175, 177-175, 178-175, 179-175, 180-175, 181-175, 182-175, 183-175, 184-175, 185-175, 186-175, 187-175, 188-175, 189-175, 190-175, 191-175, 192-175, 193-175, 194-175, 195-175, 196-175, 197-175, 198-175, 199-175, 200-175, 201-175, 202-175, 203-175, 204-175, 205-175, 206-175, 207-175, 208-175, 209-175, 210-175, 211-175, 212-175, 213-175, 214-175, 215-175, 216-175, 217-175, 218-175, 219-175, 220-175, 221-175, 222-175, 223-175, 224-175, 225-175, 226-175, 227-175, 228-175, 229-175, 230-175, 231-175, 232-175, 233-175, 234-175, 235-175, 236-175, 237-175, 238-175, 239-175, 240-175, 241-175, 242-175, 243-175, 244-175, 245-175, 246-175, 247-175, 248-175, 249-175, 250-175, 251-175, 252-175, 253-175, 254-175, 255-175, 256-175, 257-175, 258-175, 259-175, 260-175, 261-175, 262-175, 263-175, 264-175, 265-175, 266-175, 267-175, 268-175, 269-175, 270-175, 271-175, 272-175, 273-175, 274-175, 275-175, 276-175, 277-175, 278-175, 279-175, 280-175, 281-175, 282-175, 283-175, 284-175, 285-175, 286-175, 287-175, 288-175, 289-175, 290-175, 291-175, 292-175, 293-175, 294-175, 295-175, 296-175, 297-175, 298-175, 299-175, 300-175, 301-175, 302-175, 303-175, 304-175, 305-175, 306-175, 307-175, 308-175, 309-175, 310-175, 311-175, 312-175, 313-175, 314-175, 315-175, 316-175, 317-175, 318-175, 319-175, 320-175, 321-175, 322-175, 323-175, 324-175, 325-175, 326-175, 327-175, 328-175, 329-175, 330-175, 331-175, 332-175, 333-175, 334-175, 335-175, 336-175, 337-175, 338-175, 339-175, 340-175, 341-175, 342-175, 343-175, 344-175, 345-175, 346-175, 347-175, 348-175, 349-175, 350-175, 351-175, 352-175, 353-175, 354-175, 355-175, 356-175, 357-175, 358-175, 359-175, 360-175, 361-175, 362-175, 363-175, 364-175, 365-175, 366-175, 367-175, 368-175, 369-175, 370-175, 371-175, 372-175, 373-175, 374-175, 375-175, 376-175, 377-175, 378-175, 379-175, 380-175, 381-175, 382-175, 383-175, 384-175, 385-175, 386-175, 387-175, 388-175, 389-175, 390-175, 391-175, 392-175, 393-175, 394-175, 395-175, 396-175, 397-175, 398-175,

Rangers search for season's redemption with Hearts and soul

TODAY Rangers have the chance to salvage something from the most confusing season in living memory. If they do beat Hearts and win the Scottish Cup at Parkhead, it will be a fitting finale to Walter Smith's reign at Ibrox. Having recently steered the club to a record-equalling nine championships in a row, helped the club to previously unimagined economic strengths, and coaxed top international stars from all over the world to come to Glasgow, he has decided to quit. Amazingly, some of the Ibrox faithful have branded him a failure because they were pipped at the post this time.

Over in the east end, Celtic fans are almost in mourning after this season's championship and Coca-Cola Cup double.

This follows the departure in acrimonious circumstances of their manager, Wim Jansen. So, just days after one of the most important and satisfying titles in the club's history, fans are calling for the resignation of the managing director, Fergus McCann, and the general manager, Jock Brown, because of their part in the Dutchman's departure.

Down at the bottom, however, Alex McLeish, the new manager of relegated Hibernian, was being feted as a hero after his team had drawn their last game of the season against the mighty Kilmarnock. In this climate Craig Brown had better not lead Scotland in a successful World Cup campaign or he will be sacked before the end of June.

Hearts and their fans only

Back in domestic reality Hearts have in many ways provided the story of the 1997-98 season. Jim Jeffries, their manager, kept his side up alongside the Old Firm for 90 per cent of the season, using a fraction of the resources. For the first time in a decade, the effortless domination of the Glasgow giants was seriously challenged.

The Tynecastle club's progress has been the healthiest aspect in the whole of the Scottish game this year. While challenging for the league they also managed to produce a number of talented home-grown players. With Neil McCann and David Weir they have begun to mine a seam that many up here thought had offered up its last nugget.

Hearts and their fans only



Pat Nevin, the Kilmarnock and former Scotland winger, on the real heroes involved in today's Scottish Cup final

now appear to have almost fully recovered from the trauma of their last serious assault on the championship. In 1988 they lost the last game of the season to an inferior Dundee side, conceding two late goals, and so handed Celtic the title on a plate.

This season title hopes had evaporated a month earlier and since then they have been able to coast along, concentrating their thoughts on the Cup final instead. This may well be their biggest advantage today. They will be fresh, focused and

perfectly prepared for the last game of the season this time, and the spectre that has haunted the club for a decade could be banished for good.

Rangers, on the other hand, have a few more recent ghosts to exorcise. Even though they stumbled in the run-up, memorably (for me anyway) losing against Kilmarnock at home in the second to last game of the season, they still had hopes of gaining that record 10th championship in a row up until the last moment.

This tortuous run-in caused more than the obvious psychological damage. They have run themselves to exhaustion chasing Celtic, incurring injuries and suspensions to key players on the way. The latest casualties are Jörg Albertz and Jonas Thern. Their talisman, one Alastair McCooist, looks to have finally lost his battle to feature in the World Cup, having been left out of the Scotland squad which will soon fly off to America for final preparations.

A few years back I remember the cheeky smiling one withdrawing from a Scotland friendly because he was "mentally bruised" after losing a Scottish Cup tie. I think he could well be mentally broken by this late blow from Craig Brown.

Paul Gascoigne, meanwhile, is still sorely missed at Ibrox and Brian Laudrup has fallen out with the club on the eve of his departure to Chelsea.

With all this turmoil Hearts may well just have the edge in this one and it could leave Rangers without any silverware for the first year since Boy George was the new kid on the block.

For years the Scottish press have bemoaned the standard of the game because no teams were nearly strong enough to challenge Rangers. Now those same people are complaining at the paucity of the standard because Rangers cannot even be sure of beating Aberdeen, Hearts and Kilmarnock. You just can't win with some people. Of course there is a problem



Stefano Salvatori: 'Sometimes money does not make a team'

Salvatori the inspirer seeks Cup salvation

IN ITALY, it is common practice for statues of saints to be carried through the streets on their celebratory feast day. If Stefano Salvatori helps Hearts win their first piece of silverware in 36 years this year, he might be carried all the way back to Edinburgh.

Salvatori's presence in the Scottish Cup final at Celtic Park denotes that the east end of Glasgow will be turned into Little Italy for a day. Apart from the presence of the former Milan player in Jim Jefferies' ranks, Rangers will employ three of his compatriots as they seek to avoid finishing the season empty handed for the first time since the 1985-86 season.

The former Perugia pair of Rino Gattuso and Marco Negri will be part of Walter Smith's thinking for his final game in charge of the side he made the epicentre of Scottish football over the last decade. So too will be the former Fiorentina centre-half, Lorenzo Amoruso.

With neat symmetry, Amoruso played against Salvatori in the Hearts midfielder's last game in Italy two years ago. The lucky ones for Rangers fans is that it, too, was a final – the Italian Cup, Fiorentina v Atalanta – and that Amoruso's team won.

"It was a two-leg match," recalled Amoruso, "and we won the first match in Florence and then I scored in the second leg when we won 3-1. The Italian Cup has become more important to coaches and clubs in recent years but it still does not have the tradition that the Scottish Cup has."

Amoruso has tasted that tradition first hand. He made his

much delayed debut for Rangers last month on the same pitch he roared today: in the 2-1 semi-final win over Celtic.

It was an occasion which moved the giant 27-year-old, who had been ruled out almost from the day he joined the Ibrox side with an Achilles injury which required three operations and two months of rehabilitation back in the old country.

"I only planned to sit on the bench, not play," said Amoruso, "because I was not really ready. But Gordon Petric got injured and I came on after 20 minutes. Playing in that kind of game is a test of a player's character. But you cannot be afraid to play in such games if you are a professional."

"It was marvellous to hear my name being sung and then to discover the sensations of being a footballer that you have missed for so long: making tackles, shouting to team-mates. The result was wonderful."

At Hearts, Salvatori is perhaps grateful not to be weighed down with tradition: because all of it is negative. Hearts' record as Scotland's all-time chokers – they have lost a Scottish Cup final in every decade since they last won in 1956 – is not something that concerns the Italian.

"The past is not important," said the 31-year-old ballwinner. "It is the future that is important." Salvatori, who started his career with Milan before moving on to

Fiorentina and Atalanta, came to Edinburgh in 1996, two months after Hearts' most recent Cup final capitulation, a 5-1 hammering by Rangers.

In that time, Salvatori has been impressed by the club's growth both on and off the pitch. Sell-out crowds of 18,000 packed Tynecastle during the league season as the club appeared on the brink of ending its 36-year silverware famine by winning the title. Now, the Italian insists, those fans are rightly demanding the Cup as compensation.

"We lost the title," he says ruefully. "We drew too many matches we should have won. It is difficult for us to compete with Celtic or Rangers because of the money they have to buy players, but sometimes money does not make a team. That only happens if you work together."

Certainly that has been the evidence both at Rangers this season, and at Salvatori's old club, Milan. He played 15 Serie A games in 1989-90 but was left in the stand for the European Cup final that year and competition with Frank Rijkaard, Ruud Gullit and Marco van Basten was too fierce to hang around for long, so he sought his fortune elsewhere.

At the same time, a young defender called Amoruso was making a name for himself down at Bari. "I joined them when I was 17 and I played alongside

David Platt for a few months, before I moved away on loan."

Amoruso eventually helped Bari win promotion and Fiorentina bought him to add some steel to the side behind the cavalier talents of Gabriel Batistuta. However, he had a hankering for Britain and, although Manchester United showed a late interest, Amoruso plumped for Rangers, joining for £4m last June.

"I told my agent that I had a good feeling about Walter Smith from the moment I met him," explained Amoruso. "He listens to players and helped me so much, especially when I had my terrible injury. He was like a father to me."

Naturally, Amoruso and the other Rangers players wish to give Smith the Scottish Cup as a leaving present before he makes way for Dick Advocaat. "It would be nice for Walter to win his last game," he says, "but it will be difficult. Hearts are a good team, with great pace in attack, especially Neil McCann and Stéphane Adam."

For Salvatori, winning would represent the last piece of the footballing jigsaw he feels his adopted city needs to challenge the Old Firm duopoly.

"We have got some fantastic players," the Italian enthuses. "We also play some of the most attractive football in Scotland. With a few more players to strengthen the squad, we can go on to many successes. We have the capacity to create a dynasty here like Milan or Juventus." Or Rangers?

"On the pitch, we have a 50-50 chance. You never know."



Lorenzo Amoruso: 'I had a good feeling about Walter Smith'

In demand Seric grapples with country versus country dilemma

Australia/Croatia

THE 19-year-old midfielder Ante Seric has a dilemma to resolve before Croatia face Australia in a friendly on 6 June. He has been named in both countries' squads.

Seric, an Australian Institute of Sport graduate, has to decide whether to represent Australia or his parents' homeland of Croatia, where he plays his club football for Hajduk Split. On Thursday he was named in Terry Venables' squad for the friendly in Zagreb, while yesterday he found himself selected in Miroslav Blazevic's party of 25 for that game and also the

Croatia coach's provisional World Cup squad

Brazil

BRAZIL'S World Cup preparations began inauspiciously this week as a bout of influenza, a spate of injuries and club commitments reduced the first training session to just nine players.

It quickly became clear that the coach Mario Zagallo, who had hoped to start preparing his team in earnest this week, would have to wait until the team arrived in France before getting down to any serious work.

The central defender

Marcio Santos was dropped from the squad because of a pulled muscle on Wednesday, while the next to drop out of the tournament on Thursday was Flávio Conceição.

Andre Cruz, of Milan was named as the replacement for Marcio Santos while Ze Carlos de São Paulo came in for Flávio Conceição. Romário and Cesar Sampaião are also on the injured list, while seven players were allowed to remain with their clubs until next week.

Azerbaijan

THE team with the most points has won the league championship of Azerbaijan – for a change. Kepez Ganca sealed the title in the former Soviet republic on Thursday.

Last year, in an unusual experiment, Nefichi Bakur collected the most points but second-placed Garabag Agdam were declared champions – on the basis of their junior team's better performance in a separate youth league.

The Azeri championship is rarely orthodox. Calculating the league table this year had been complicated by the exclusion of two clubs from the 14-team top division in mid-season for failing to meet financial commitments.

Andorra

CLUB Esportiu Principat – known locally as Charlie's Restaurant – secured their second successive Andorran title this week, after finishing the season unbeaten with a 5-0 win at Magatzems Llina.

The team's nickname comes from the meeting place of the Andorran branch of the Real Madrid supporters' club, who formed Club Esportiu. They will be competing in the UEFA Cup again next season. Last August, as Andorra's first European representatives, they were thrashed 17-0 on aggregate by Dundee United.

25 days...

until the World Cup finals begin in France...

The Norwegian midfielder Trond Egil Solvold has pulled out of his country's World Cup squad to be present at the birth of his second child. The 30-year-old Coventry City player has informed the Norwegian football federation that, rather than play in the finals in France next month, he wants to stay in the West Midlands with his family. Solvold, a £500,000 signing from Rosenborg Trondheim last summer, has played 36 games in his first season in English football and, after playing in Norway's last two internationals, was a near certainty for a place in the starting line-up at France 98. Yesterday, though, he said: "I have told them I will not be going even if I am picked. My wife is pregnant and I will be staying in Coventry to take care of my family. We shall spend the summer in England."

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Vieira vies for Double glory and French passage

Glenn Moore meets the combative 21-year-old midfielder who has won admirers at Highbury and beyond this season, culminating perhaps in FA Cup triumph today and a place in France's World Cup squad

THEY will look an odd pair when, as they surely will, they square up to each other at Wembley today. The short, blond Yorkshireman and the tall, black Senegalese. It will not be so much eyeball-to-eyeball as forehead-to-chin but, do not be mistaken, as David Batty and Patrick Vieira snarl at each other there will be mutual respect behind the machismo.

Batty, says Vieira, "is the best English midfielder in the Premiership." This is not a view everybody shares but its recipient is unlikely to be any less effusive about Vieira. While the defenders have been lauded and the star Dutch striker rewarded, the Highbury faithful have no doubts their Dakar-born French international midfielder is the key man behind Arsenal's march towards the Double.

One long-time season-ticket holder said yesterday that Vieira was in the process of supplanting Ian Wright as Highbury's cult hero. One indication of this is that the first chant is now the poetic: "He comes from Senegal, he plays for Arsenal, Vieira, Vieira".

The 21-year-old was an instant hit at Arsenal, making his debut as a substitute against Sheffield Wednesday in September 1996, the same night as Arsène Wenger greeted the faithful by video link having been confirmed as manager. He quickly helped turn a 1-0 deficit into a 4-1 win and a legend was born.

Vieira has since forged an impressive midfield bulwark with his compatriot Emmanuel Petit which, said Martin Keown, "has certainly made our job easier in defence – it will probably extend my career."

Both Frenchmen have been included in Aimé Jacquet's 28-man pre-World Cup squad and, while Petit appears resigned to missing out, Vieira thinks a good performance today could help him make the finals. "It is a very important match, the last before the 22 is named," he said. "It is on French TV and everybody will be watching it around the world. It is a very important game for us. Manu [Petit], Nicolas [Anelka] and myself all have a chance, we are all 50-50."

Among those watching will be relatives in Senegal where the game is being relayed live by the cable channel Canal+.

With a national average of one television for every 30 people, there will be much crowding around to see Senegal's most famous export since Youssou N'Dour, the pop singer who, incidentally, performs the official World Cup anthem.

Vieira left Senegal, a former French west African colony, aged seven, to join his mother, a school dinner lady, in a mundane Parisian suburb. He joined Tours, then Cannes, where Luis Fernandez gave him his debut at 18. He was soon a captain but, almost as quickly, became a reserve as Milan signed and forgot him. He played just twice in Serie A with his most dramatic involvement coming as a passenger when George Weah, who had taken him under his wing, wrote off his car on the Côte d'Azur.

'He reminds me of Graeme Souness, harassing players, setting the tempo, dominating games with his fitness'

Fortunately, he had earlier made a better impression in the area, playing for Cannes against Monaco. "I knew that I must follow his progress," said Wenger, then at Monaco. "I saw his quick responses, quick movement of the feet for such a tall player and that he could already pick the right forward pass." Wenger later recommended him to Highbury and, for £3.5m, Milan were persuaded to sell.

The presence of Wenger, who had been given a glowing reference by Weah, was a major influence in his coming. "I knew his training would teach me a lot," Vieira said. "He is a good manager if you have a problem you can talk to him, there is a very good dialogue between manager and player." Vieira speaks good English in a soft voice using his hands – one adorned with a chunky watch, the other with a ring with the initial P on it – to add emphasis.

When he stands he looks lean and leggy, almost gaunt, but he moves with surprising elegance and deceptive speed on

the pitch, eating up the ground like Curtly Ambrose running between the wickets. At Barnsley last month he raced for goal pursued by Martin Bullock and Scott Jones. Neither are slouches but, giving away eight and 11 inches respectively, they made a comical sight as their little legs frantically tried to catch his spidery figure.

Vieira's own legs appear telescopic as they snake out to intercept or tackle. Mark McGhee, recalling the semi-final with Wolves, said: "He was the fittest player I've seen in a long time. At his best he reminds me of Graeme Souness, harassing players, setting the tempo, dominating games with his fitness. He breaks things down, chases people into making mistakes and has a tremendous tackle. He makes a challenge, the ball goes for a throw-in and there he is again, as if he hasn't broken sweat."

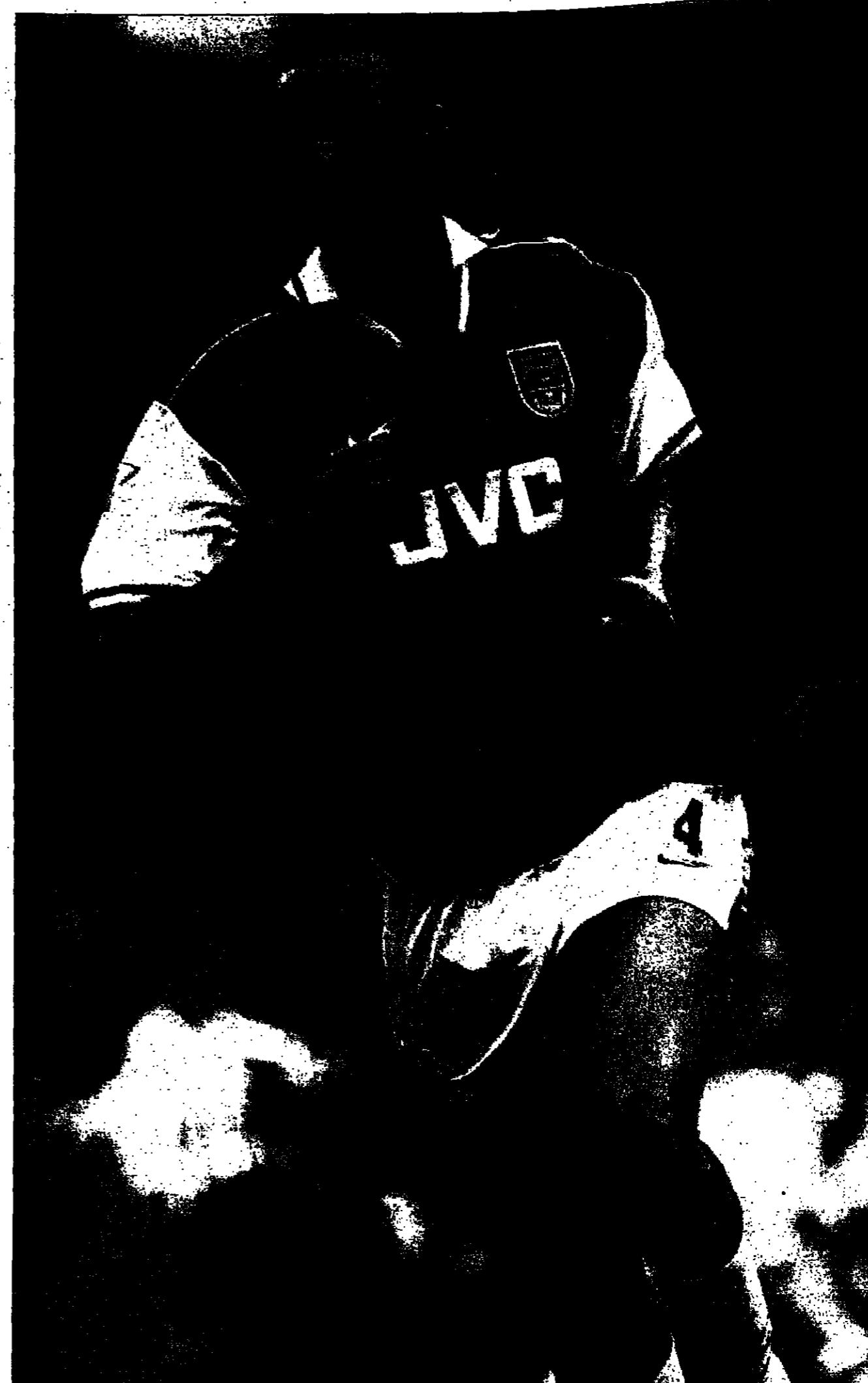
With an impressive first touch, a powerful shot and a steely determination he appears the complete midfielder but he is not perfect. He has been sent off twice, booked 11 times and is facing an Football Association inquiry over video evidence that he kicked West Ham's Ian Pearce off the ball during the FA Cup tie at Upton Park.

Today's referee is Paul Durkin, England's World Cup referee who sent off Petit for laying his hands on him during the Aston Villa match at Highbury. Durkin did, however, rescind a yellow card he had given to Vieira in March after seeing the video.

That decision came as Vieira was improving his record with only one booking in the latter stages of the season. "When you play in my position it is very difficult to avoid red and yellow cards because you need to have determination and aggression," he said. "I spoke to the manager and some players but I haven't changed. I keep the same determination."

What has changed is his attitude to referees and, with Arsenal's improvement in form, his mood. "When I was not playing so good, and we lost, I was blaming the referee. I needed to accept it was my fault. I got so many cards because I was talking too much."

Both he and the Highbury faithful will want his football to do the talking today.



Patrick Vieira enjoys his goal against Newcastle last month in another impressive performance

Photograph: Paul Webb

Wenger philosophy expanding Arsenal's rich potential

WHEN asked recently to compare Arsenal's present team with their 1971 Double winners George Graham took refuge in a joke: "We had more class," he chuckled. Graham – "given time" he says – had class, so did Charlie George, whose goal in extra-time against Liverpool at Wembley added the FA Cup to the championship Arsenal secured with a victory at Tottenham six days earlier. But Arsenal's success in Graham's day resulted mainly from graft, good organisation and the spirit typified by Frank McLintock's inspirational leadership.

Overall comparison is pointless anyway. The "foreigners" (unavailable to England's national team) at Highbury in 1971 – Graham, McLintock, Pat Rice and Bob Wilson – were Scots and Irish. Now French is the

dressing-room's second language and the two most gifted attackers are Dutch. Who among Arsenal's faithful 27 years ago could have imagined the appointment of a foreign coach and an infusion of talent from overseas made possible by television funding?

Despite England's success in the 1966 World Cup and club achievements in Europe, English football was thought to be technically bereft and backward tactically. Great European stars of the time scoffed at the idea of playing here. Thus two factors have combined to suggest that Arsenal can now consistently challenge Manchester United: Wenger's philosophy and his knowledge of Europe (especially in France) when seeking to expand Arsenal's potential.

Using experience gained when managing Millwall, recruiting Lee Dixon, Steve Bould and Nigel Winterburn from the game's lower reaches, Graham built a defence around Tony Adams that helped bring two further championships and the FA Cup to Highbury. With the

In one important respect, conforming to a tradition laid down in the 1930s, Arsenal resemble the team (coached by Don Howe) with which Bertie Mee won the Double and those that won two championships under Graham: Adventure is all well and good but defence remains a priority. Arsenal's solid back line in 1971 was made up of Rice (now Wenger's assistant), McLintock, Peter Simpson and Bob McNab with Peter Storey in the first line of

addition of Martin Keown for Bould it is still in place, but the problem presented to Wenger by the aging of this unit has been eased by his French central midfield pairing of Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit.

The victory at Old Trafford that turned things Arsenal's way saw Vieira and Petit at their most influential. "They can play it as you want," said Graham.

"Excellent quick passes, strong in possession and mean when necessary."

After Arsenal drew with

Leeds at Elland Road on the opening day, Graham tipped them to take the Premiership title from Manchester United:

"Some people thought I was making a case for my own team, but I really did feel that Arsenal had all it took to be champions."

Not that everything worked

entirely to the satisfaction of Arsenal's supporters. Dennis Bergkamp's classic scoring feats were interspersed with dilatory contributions, Marc Overmars was ineffective until halfway through the season and Nicolas Anelka looked out of his depth. Neither did the adventure Wenger encouraged in his defenders wash with everyone. "They'll win nothing unless those guys are told to concentrate on what they are best at,"

a rival manager said after Arsenal lost 3-1 at home to Blackpool Rovers. Eventually, Wenger's team came to have shape and consistent purpose, displaying qualities that had not previously been associated with the '97/98 Arsenal.

Two of the things remembered from 1971 are directness and the unflagging effort typified by George Armstrong's selfless industry on the wing. Attacks were often built on long forward passes to John Radford and Ray Kennedy with Graham and George moving in support. "A big thing was sticking at it, grinding out results when we played poorly," McLintock recalled.

If this was not quite the image people had of Graham as a player it stood as a cornerstone of his philosophy when

Doing the double

LEAGUE AND FA CUP DOUBLE WINNERS

1988-89 Preston North End: Best Wolves 5-0 in the final at Wembley in front of a then record crowd of 65,000. - Danny, Campbell and Crabbie scored

1989-90 Tottenham Hotspur: Best Leicester 2-0 in the final at Wembley in front of 100,000. - Smith and Dyson did the damage to secure London's first double since 1901.

1970-71 Arsenal: Best Liverpool 2-1 in the final at Wembley to equal the achievement of their north London rivals Spurs 20 years earlier. Eddie Kelly and Charlie George scored for Arsenal, half-way for Liverpool.

1993-94 Manchester United: Best Chelsea 4-0 in the final with Carlton and Simeon scoring. - United also won the Premiership by eight points from Blackburn.

1994-95 Manchester United: Secured the double title in a many years with a single Eric Cantona goal for Liverpool in the final. Won the Premiership by four points from Newcastle.

North London's years of plenty: How Arsenal have enjoyed regular success since their 1971 Double triumph

1970-71 THE DOUBLE



1978-79 A WEMBLEY EPIC

Arsenal's fourth FA Cup final in seven seasons – they had lost to Leeds in 1972 and Ipswich in 1978 – produced possibly the most amazing finish in the competition's history. Five minutes from time, Arsenal, managed by Terry Neill, led Manchester United 2-0. But then United scrambled not just one goal from Gordon McQueen but another by Sammy McIlroy from which they gained such momentum it seemed they could even snatch victory. Instead, a weary Liam Brady took the ball forward again for Arsenal, released Graham Rix on the left and Alan Sunderland found the energy to arrive on the blind side of United's defence to turn Rix's deep cross into an astonishing winning goal.

1986-87 JUST THE START

SO proclaimed George Graham, the man of the match from Arsenal's 1971 Wembley triumph, as his first season as manager brought another slice of Cup glory, this time in the Littlewoods Cup. Having achieved his first priority of establishing a formidable back four – Arsenal set a club record run of 22 matches unbeaten between September and January – Graham restored the side's spirit, celebrated by the fans in song. "One-nil down two-one up, that's how Arsenal won the Cup" became an anthem after two goals by Charlie Nicholas cancelled out Ian Rush's opener for Liverpool at Wembley, the third time Graham's team had recovered from a goal down on the way to lifting the trophy.



1988-89 MICHAEL THOMAS AND 'THAT' GOAL

IN the last week of a season remembered bleakly for the Hillsborough disaster, Liverpool were poised to better Arsenal's proud achievement by becoming the first side to win the Double twice. To do so, they had to beat Everton at Wembley, win their penultimate League match against West Ham (at home) and not lose their final fixture against erstwhile leaders Arsenal – also at home – by two goals. Victors by 2-2 in the Cup final, they thrashed West Ham 5-1 and the idea that they would then slip up at Anfield seemed unthinkable, even after Alan Smith had stolen a 1-0 lead seven minutes into the second half. The score remained unchanged with 90 minutes up – then Lee Dixon booted the ball upfield. Smith lobbed it into the path of Michael Thomas and (above) the Championship acquired the most dramatic of all its final twists.

1990-91 A BRAWL AND A JAIL SENTENCE BUT VICTORY AGAIN

THE infamous Old Trafford brawl of 20 October – only David Seaman declined to join in – cost Arsenal a £50,000 fine and, more significantly, two points. Then, in the final at Wembley, Tony Adams was jailed for nine months – five suspended – for drink driving. Yet Arsenal still won the title by seven points, having along the way established their best start to a season. They lost just once all term.

1992-93 A DOUBLE OF CUPS

AS Manchester United were ending their 26-year wait for the Championship, Arsenal had the not inconsiderable consolation of winning both domestic cups, defeating Sheffield Wednesday at Wembley twice. The Coca-Cola final was the one that tested Steve Morrow's friendship with Tony Adams. After the young full back's first goal for the club had proved enough to win the day, a delighted Adams hoisted Morrow in the air during the post-match celebrations... only to drop him. Morrow suffered a broken arm, which cost him a return to Wembley for the FA Cup final on 15 May. Arsenal won again, after a replay.

1993-94 ONE-NIL TO THE ARSENAL

GRAHAM'S first European trophy – and just in the nick of time, as it turned out, given the scandal that was to cost him his job the following season. His team delivered what could be seen as the perfect epitaph to the Graham era: a performance built around resolute defending and one goal, by Alan Smith, to defeat Parma to lift the European Cup-Winners' Cup in Copenhagen.

Pearce hopes to repay the Geordie faith

At 36 the Newcastle defender may be surplus to Glenn Hoddle's needs, but he has an old score to settle at Wembley today. Simon Turnbull reports

STUART PEARCE has reason to recall the last time the elusive cup of a major trophy was dashed from the thirsting lips of the Toon Army. Three days after Kevin Keegan's cavaliers completed their Devon Loch in the Premiership stakes two years ago, 2,000 Newcastle fans packed into the Bridgeford Stand at the City Ground for Pearce's testimonial match.

"Now you're gonna believe us," they sang. "We nearly won the league." At the final whistle, a Keegan penalty having failed to save Newcastle from a defeat less painful than their championship surrender to Manchester United, Pearce acknowledged the Geordie chants of "Psycho" with more than his familiar clenched-fist salute.

He removed his jersey and threw it to the Tyneside throng. It was ever thus with Pearce, the one player guaranteed to give his all, even the shirt off his back. This afternoon at Wembley that shirt will be black and white.

"It's strange how things work out," Pearce mused. "I'll never forget what Kevin Keegan did for me. Even when things went badly for Newcastle he honoured his promise to bring his team down to Nottingham. I'll always remember that."

"I'll always remember the Geordies who came down too. I was very grateful to them at the time and I'm grateful I've had the chance to repay them by giving my best in a black and white shirt."

That best has paid back the Toon Army with an opportunity to end the long wait for first-class silverware at St James' Park. As the only ever-present in Newcastle's FA Cup run to Wembley, Pearce has done more than anyone else to put his club within 90 minutes of their first major prize (with due deference to the Texaco and Anglo-Italian cups) since the Fairs Cup in 1969.

The cavalier days have turned from black and white to sepia at Newcastle this season but Pearce has been a swash-buckling success for Kenny Dalglish's Roundheads. At left-back and at centre-half, he

helped to restrict the rearguard damage done to the down-the-middle Magpies in the Premiership campaign, which ended last Sunday with the runners-up of 12 months ago four points off a relegation place.

Pearce and his defensive colleagues conceded 44 Premiership goals, an increase of just four from last season, when Newcastle qualified for the Champions' League. Their problem has not been at the back but at the front, where productivity has dropped by more than half - from 73 league goals last term to 35 this.

Newcastle's season will probably be remembered for scoring of a rather different kind - the prolific spree credited to their former chairman and, er, vice-chairman - unless, that is, Pearce and the rest of the boys in black and white can snuff out the Arsenal this afternoon.

Their hopes of doing so will only be enhanced by the inspirational presence of English football's lionheart.

Pearce has one FA Cup medal in his personal trophy cabinet but it was placed there disdainfully in 1991, after the free-kick he hammered past Erik Thorstvedt proved to be nothing more than a consolation goal for Nottingham Forest against Spurs. When he returned to the City Ground that night, as the losing captain, he found the Forest directors celebrating their big day out. He was not a happy man.

"I tore a right old strip off one of them," he recalled. "I play football to win, not to come second. I get very disappointed when I don't win."

"I don't believe defeat at Wembley is a cause for celebration. Some people might say: 'Well, we've had a good day out or whatever.' But I've yet to be convinced of that."

At 36 Pearce remains as pragmatically sparky as the 20-year-old punk-rock-loving left-back who reached the first round of the FA Cup with Wealdstone while in the employ of Brent Council as an electrician. "We lost 2-0 at Swindon," he said, smiling at the memory. "Paul Rideout told me

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Pearce may have lasted only five months in the management game but his *curriculum vitae* includes a victory in opposition to the Frenchman who hopes to guide the Gunners to the Premiership and FA Cup double this afternoon.

He has also, for that matter, outsmarted the boss whose team stand in the Wembley way of Arsène's Arsenal. The last manager to knock out Newcastle in the FA Cup will be playing for them today.

"Yeah, that's right," Pearce said, smiling at the reflected irony of Forest's 2-1 fourth-round success at St James' last season. "Funny old game, eh?" he said. "The FA Cup

has tremendous history and tradition. We had a great time in the '50s and there's no reason why it can't happen again."

"Forget about the season. We look at the season in retrospect and say it was just a blip on the gradual progression of the club. We are a great club and we've had a tremendous future."

"You always have to be optimistic and you've always got to achieve excellence, but you have to do even better than that, which is what we try to do at Newcastle."

"Arsenal have played some super stuff and you've got to say well done to them. The book-

ies quite rightly make them hot favourites because we've struggled this season."

"But I've watched our team recently and there's a tremendous loyalty support. I hope they get their reward and that we win the cup, the team brings it back and we parade it around the streets."

Sir John is demanding the team give the Toon Army what they deserve and end on a high after a season to forget at St James' Park.

"It's a day for the fans and players, not directors and chairman," he added. "The team know they are on show and

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SPORT

Saturday 16 May 1998 ■

FA Cup final: Bergkamp's absence opens way for fellow striker as Shearer leads Newcastle's bid to deny Arsenal the Double

Wright's chance for final fame

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

IT HAS all the right ingredients. The classic north-south contest, contrasting managers, World Cup hopefuls galore, two clubs gilded with Cup pedigree – one aiming to make history, the other seeking redemption – plus a whiff of controversy and touch of romance. Will this be the year the FA Cup final finally lives up to the hype?

Not since 1991, when Tottenham beat Nottingham Forest in the final of Gazza's wounded knee, has the oldest trophy of them all had a memorable finale. Last year's contest was a Chelsea walkover. The previous one, between Liverpool and Manchester United, a snorath.

There are reservations. Form suggests Arsenal should win the tie at a stroll, while Newcastle's approach no longer stirs the soul. However, Arsenal may be weakened by the absence of Dennis Bergkamp, whose hamstring injury broke down in training yesterday, while Newcastle still have the potential to both excite and succeed if Kenny Dalglish slips the leash.

He may have to if he wants to redeem a season of soured promise and bitter division with victory. At Highbury last month he sought to stifle Arsenal and hope Alan Shearer could nick a goal. It almost worked as Shearer went close at one end while Arsenal were frustrated at the other.

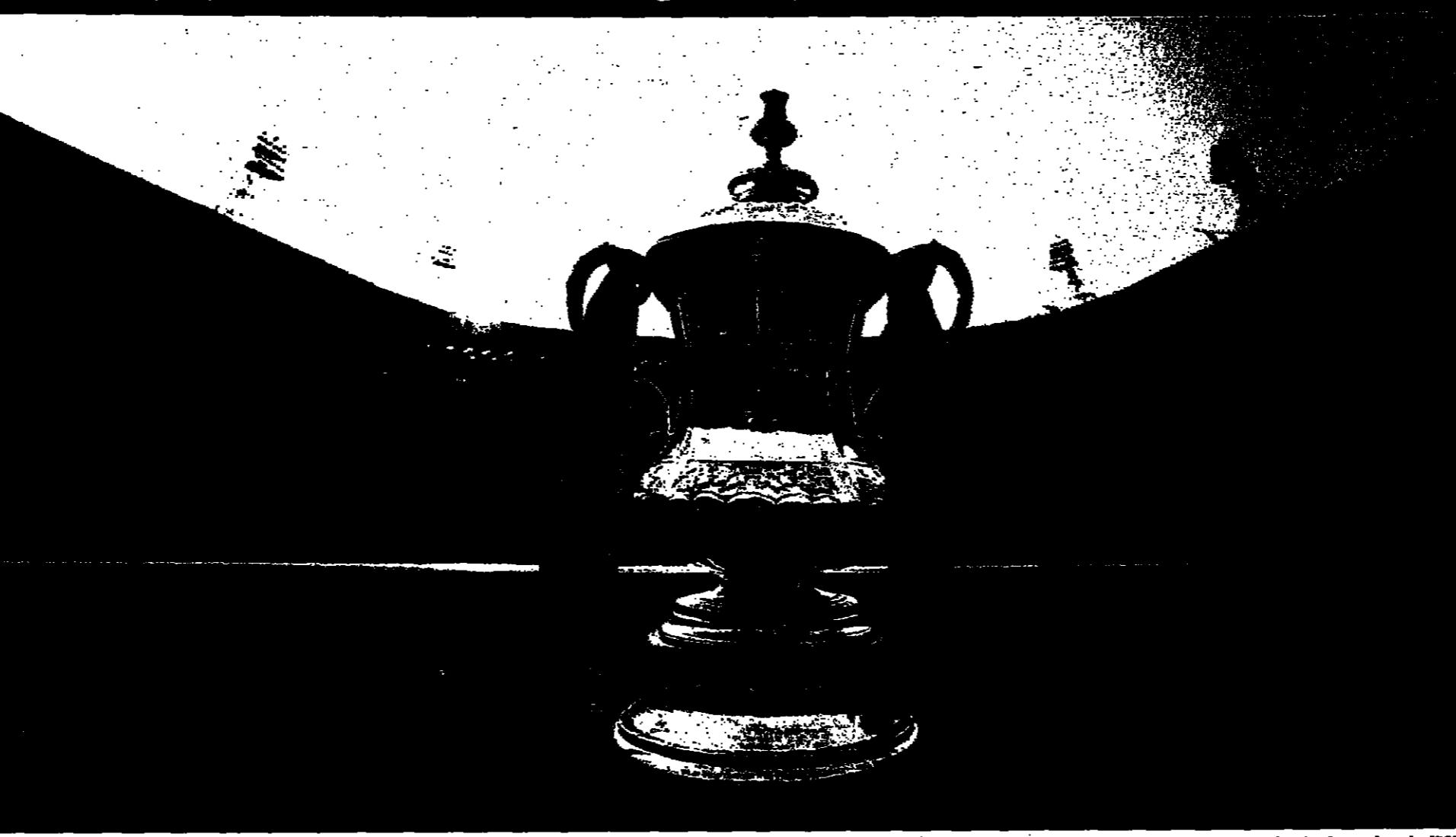
But then Nicolas Anelka scored just before half-time and the game was over. Having been set up so defensively, Newcastle did not have the firepower to draw level and they lost 3-0.

Keith Gillespie did not play in that match and, while he has been erratic, he does offer Newcastle's best attacking option after Shearer. However, he has not played since being bundled into White Hart Lane's advertising hoardings by Colin Calderwood and, even when fit, does not seem part of Dalglish's plans.

Some of the Scot's team selections have been in line with the *Guinness* slogan "not everything in black and white makes sense" and today's XI is shrouded in doubt.

The spine – Shay Given, Nikos Dabizas, Stuart Pearce, Rob Lee, David Batty and Alan Shearer – is predictable, but not the flanks. Of these, the most important choice will be the right-

The Cup they won't be fighting for today



The FA Cup trophy that has been hoist aloft by 71 winning captains this century was on display at Wembley yesterday as dawn broke over the national stadium. However, this trophy will not be seen today. Because it was starting to show

signs of wear, the Cup was replaced by a replica six years ago. The original is now used purely for publicity and promotional purposes. The current version is in fact the fourth FA Cup trophy. The first, much smaller than the present design, was

stolen from the display window of a Birmingham shop in 1895 and the second (a replica of the first) was replaced in 1911 by the trophy that was on display yesterday. The fourth model was first used in 1922.

Photograph: Peter Key

back who will have the daunting task of tracking Marc Overmars.

Steve Watson and Warren Barton are the most likely candidates, but Dalglish may switch Alessandro Pistone, who has pace and did well when marking Ryan Giggs at Old Trafford, to the right and play Barton or Watson in right midfield.

Bergkamp's injury looks to have given Ian Wright the chance of a glorious end to a difficult season. If the Cup is in a romantic mood he will cement his World Cup place with a leading role this afternoon although, given his lack of match practice, he may struggle to finish the game.

Having won four and drawn one of the six games Bergkamp has missed since November, including the victory over Newcastle, Arsenal will be confident they can win without him. Their biggest worry is the need to regain their momentum.

They have relaxed since clinching the championship, losing heavily at Anfield and 1-0 to a 10-man Aston Villa and it is not always easy to pick up

the pace. However, the team appears both relaxed and determined.

"It is a great day for the public," Martin Keown said, "but

players we must focus on the match not the occasion. Only the winners will be remembered."

As potential Double winners thus team will be remembered

more than most, but while Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, played down the historical importance of the game, saying that the team had to concentrate on the match in isolation,

Dalglish was prepared to look further ahead.

"A cup can be a springboard to greater success," he

said. "You think of Mark Robins' goal at Nottingham Forest [which earned Manchester United a third-round victory en route to the 1991 FA Cup triumph that eased the pressure on Alex Ferguson] and Kevin Brock's back-pass at Oxford [which, converted by Adrian Heath, helped Everton's passage to the 1984 League Cup final and probably saved Howard Kendall's job in his first spell at Everton]."

Both clubs went on to win championships and Dalglish, pondering the possibility of emulating them, added: "I can't think of a moment that changed it for us yet, but it is only when you look back you can say: 'That was the turning point.'

Shearer's goal against Stevenage may thus, one day, hold a similar place in Toon legend as Robins' strike and Brock's error do at Old Trafford and Goodison Park. It would certainly be a better memory of the campaign than either the undignified squabbling with the non-Leaguers, or the later boardroom scandal.

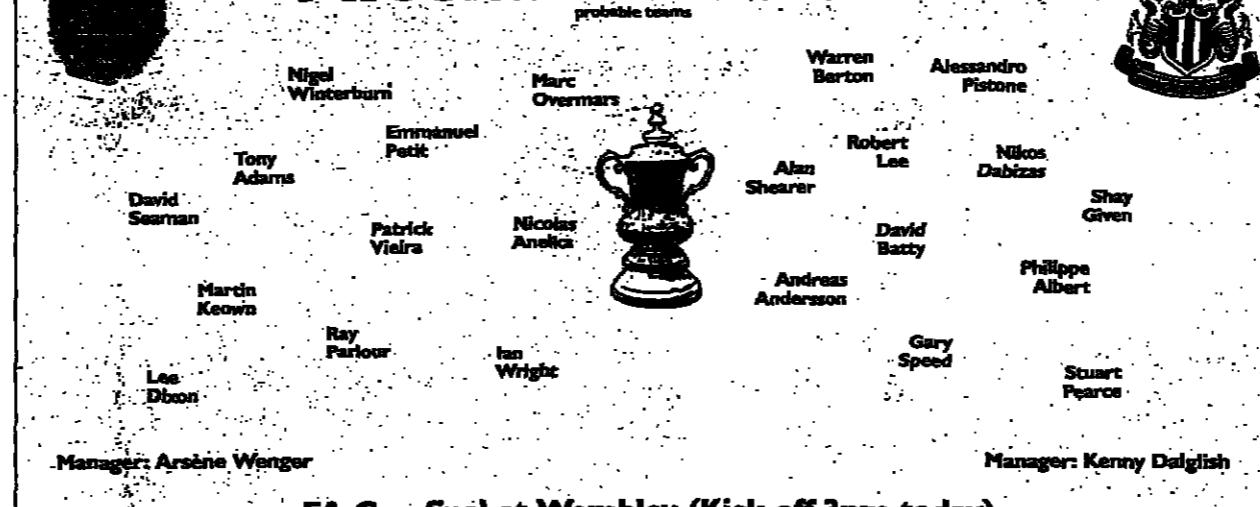
The Toongate Tapes may ping on today. Newcastle fans will be watching carefully to see if the disgraced former directors, Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall, turn up, and many will be angered if, as with the semi-final, Dalglish or Sir John Hall dedicates victory to them.

That aspect may be academic. Special performances from Shearer and Given could tilt the balance, but the odds favour Arsenal. They may have had an uncertain progress, needing penalties to beat Port Vale and West Ham, but they are tighter in defence, better balanced in midfield and, even without Bergkamp, just as potent in attack.

Having lost controversially to Newcastle in 1932, when the ball went out before it was crossed for the winning goal, and heroically in 1952, when dejected by injury, Arsenal should now gain recompense and add the men's FA Cup to the women's on their open-top parade around Islington tomorrow.

Final focus, pages 26-27

Arsenal v Newcastle



FA Cup final at Wembley (Kick-off 3pm today)

TWELVE PAGES OF SPORT BEGIN ON PAGE 16



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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3612, Saturday 16 May

By Spoxies

ACROSS

DOWN

- 1 Island king returns to promised land (6)
5 She wears ribbons at work (6)
8 Advertisement featuring Greek character, inferior writer (9)
9 Dog biting end of Mimir's tongue (5)
11 A hundred years in prison? (4)
12 Slow progress made finding room to store ironmongery (6,4)
13 Surprise, surprise - Austria's fashionable (8)
15 Question answered by children (5)
17 Turn out smartly, only to face a come-down (5)
19 About to gain admission to Empire, possibly for first performance (8)
22 Participate in trial (10)
23 Unsuccessful host is fired (4)
25 Vernacular encountered in Latin bar, mostly (5)
26 Unwelcome change to our plan where pick-up's involved (9)
27 Soldier possessing little English has to translate conversational Japanese (6)
28 One with pad expected to produce notes for letter? (6)
- 2 Article in Paris that's visible from where we stand? It's a trick! (7)
3 A grate that's not secured (4)
4 Classical scholar finally putting in time in Italy? (8)
5 Excessively quick? After seconds have been lost, more like "lethargic" (6)
6 See Pa miss out, unfortunately - should get a K (9)
7 Boats are made initially to go in between bridges (7)
8 Cards old people receive at last when a student's on holiday, say? (7,4)
10 Device for discovering exact position (if what you say is true)? (3,8)
14 Given a very bad press, so iron out wrinkles? (9)
16 Blow large sum of money? That's crazy (8)
18 Wid area covered by vessels moored in river (7)
20 Organisational level where City man has to cover half of capital (7)
21 Trojan queen given address of Our Man in Havana? (6)
24 Old prison, easy to get out of (4)

Hasselbaink mark two to join Leeds

By Alan Nixon

GEORGE GRAHAM, the Leeds United manager, has signed the Dutch striker Clyde Wijnhoud from Willem II for £2m. The powerful 24-year-old flew in to complete contract talks and have a medical. He will be a new partner for Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Wijnhoud was profiled in the Dutch First Division last season with 15 goals for his club, and Graham was impressed with him on spying trips as he scoured Europe. Like Hasselbaink, Wijnhoud was born in Surinam and is a similar type who will add strength to the Leeds attack at home and in the Uefa Cup next season.

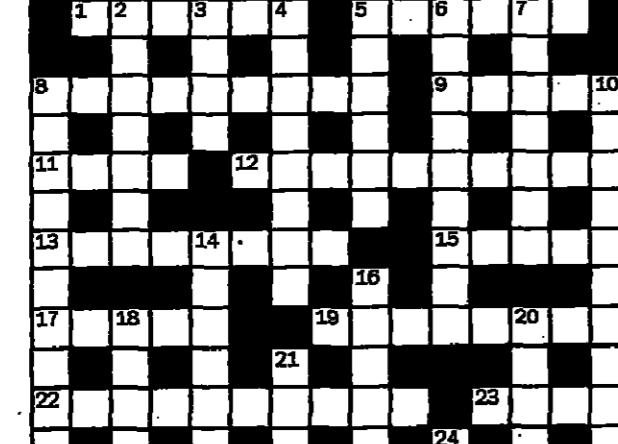
Manchester United are unlikely to pursue their interest in Argentinian international striker Gabriel Batistuta. It was rumoured United were prepared to spend £1m on the 29-year-old Fiorentina player just over a week after splashing out £10.7m on the Dutch defender, Jaap Stam.

United's reserve goalkeeper Kevin Pilkington has joined the long-serving Brian McClair as the second squad player on the list of players to be released by Manchester United this summer. The youngsters Stuart Brightwell, David Brown, Ross Millar and Gavin Naylor are others leaving Old Trafford. United have, however, offered a new contract to the winger Ben Thorley.

McClair is now wanted by Macclesfield Town, but the Second Division club's manager, Sammy McClroy, has yet to sign a new contract due to a creditors' bill believed to be approaching £500,000.

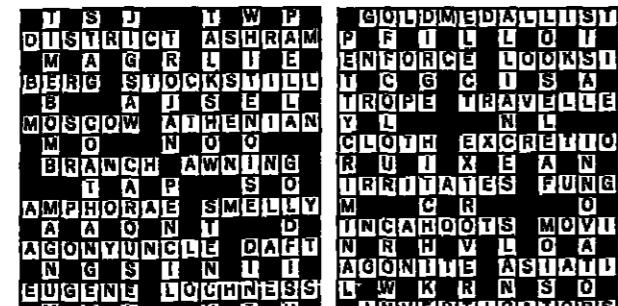
Since the suicide of their former chairman, Arthur Jones, nearly 18 months ago, the newly-promoted Cheshire club have been locked in complicated legal discussions with the creditors of his bankrupt business.

Jansen broadside, page 24



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle, opened next Thursday, receive £100 each. The first 100 entries of Queen's Award winners, and the first 100 entries of the Queen's Award for Enterprise, will receive £50 each. Send solutions to: The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford.

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Sunday 16 May 1998

Published as a newspaper with the Post Office

Penalty

Ban

New ways to...



PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 16 May 1998

Bank on getting the best rates

Existing savers often lose out when banks try to woo new custom. Both the Ombudsman and Treasury can help. Paul Slade reports

There is nothing as infuriating as being treated like a second-class citizen. Yet millions of people suffer this fate every year. They are victims of a cynical calculation by the UK's high street institutions that their custom is less important than that of those who have yet to be signed up.

Big banks – and some building societies – offer high rates of interest to pull in new customers because they do not want to lose market share to new competitors such as Sainsbury, Tesco or Safeway – where savings earn 6.5 per cent gross or more from the first £1 onwards, and is always available.

Offering the same high rates to all their existing savers would eat into profits, so older customers are often left in the dark with a far lower interest rate.

Moreover, according to leaked internal memos from institutions such as Lloyds TSB and Bradford & Bingley, staff are apparently required not to inform their customers of higher-

paying accounts.

The last thing banks and building societies want is for their existing savers to demand the same returns. But if a

pledge by Helen Liddell, the

Treasury minister, is to be believed, the days of such shabby treatment for existing bank customers may be numbered.

Mrs Liddell announced last week that the Treasury is to conduct an investigation into the way banks operate and threaten to replace the existing system of voluntary regulation with statutory controls.

The MP David Davis, whose views sparked the Treasury inquiry, calls the banks' behaviour "systematic and deliberate".

The Treasury's inquiry



comes as the Consumers' Association mounts its own survey into savings accounts, to be published in the campaign group's monthly magazine *Which?* in the autumn. Neil Walking, a researcher with the Consumers' Association says: "As soon as a new account is launched with a much better rate, the bank should write to all the customers who may be expected to want to switch over." Instead, the banks rely mostly on posters in branches and ads on pages like these.

If you think your own bank has stranded you in a poorly paying account, get someone there to talk you through the other options available. Make sure you understand the main restrictions applying on each account before you take the plunge.

If you decide to switch, but the bank demands that you pay a penalty before taking the money out of your old account, point out that the Banking Ombudsman may a dim view of this.

The deputy Banking Ombudsman, Chris Eadie, says: "If we think a bank has been unfair in the way it has handled a lock-in to a particular interest rate, then we will decide against the bank – and there have been cases where we have done that."

It is the Ombudsman's job to resolve disputes when the bank and the customer reach deadlock. The Ombudsman received 8,818 complaints in the year to 30 September, 1997. About half of the 674 cases

which went on to a full investigation were resolved in favour of the customer.

It would be useful to know just which banks he has found wanting, so we could all avoid them, but this is information the Ombudsman refuses to provide.

Mr Eadie says: "I think it might seem unfair for a bank to get caught out for one particular bad thing when they might be providing quite a good service to customers in other ways." Mr Eadie says his office has already received "a

very considerable number of complaints" against Northern Rock, which angered savers at the end of last month.

The bank has collapsed its postal range from 11 accounts to just three. This left many savers with a lower interest rate than they had been receiving before, albeit with a shorter notice period to match. The changes took effect on 23 April.

Northern Rock savers who do not like the new rates, and want to take their money elsewhere, will have to serve the account's notice period or sacrifice up to 60 days' interest.

New ways to perform the same old tricks against customers

A change to the Banking Code last year barred one bank trick but left the way open to another.

Once, the banks would simply close an obsolete account to new business, leaving the savers already in that account to languish there. Since last July, however, the code has insisted that customers in these discontinued accounts are sent annual notice of the bank's other accounts and the (generally higher) interest they pay. But this clause applies only to accounts which are "no longer available to customers".

The idea was that savers in the discontinued accounts could then see that they would get a far better return elsewhere, and be able to change their account accordingly.

But the banks have already found a way round this. Now they leave the old accounts open. No one in their right mind would start such an uncompetitive account but – technically – they are still available to customers.

At the Consumers' Association, Neil Walking says: "What tends to happen now is that the banks don't

actually discontinue their old accounts – so that provision in the banking code doesn't apply.

"Say they're launching one of those new instant-access accounts that has limited withdrawals, but pays a much better rate of interest than the old instant-access account. There's no requirement for them to write to existing customers to tell them.

"That suits the banks because they don't have to pay the higher rate to all their existing customers."

Other scams operated by banks and

building societies include hiding onerous conditions linked to apparently generous accounts in the small print.

In other cases, the product appears designed to catch savers out, such as Abbey National's postal account. This pays a bonus each quarter – but linked to the smallest amount in the account.

So, if the account held £25,000 for most of the quarter but dipped to £25 for one day, the bonus paid is on that smaller amount.

Penalty points for loyalty

A leading financial information group is accusing mortgage lenders of deliberately penalising their existing borrowers in order to attract new customers.

MoneyFacts, a highly respected provider of mortgage and savings statistics, says offers from lenders to new borrowers are generally far better than to their older ones.

"Products available for switching – existing borrowers not moving house or lender but who wish to remain with the same lender – are usually offered somewhat under performance, and rates are not usually as competitive as those on offer to a new borrower who has never been with that lender before," says Vicki Burn, mortgage editor at *MoneyFacts*.

She gives the example of Halifax, where a typical discounted variable rate for new borrowers is 6.95 per cent until the end of August, 2003. Yet, while this rate is also available

for people who want to switch to Halifax, it is denied to the neo-bank's existing borrowers.

"This does seem to indicate that lenders are deliberately using long-established loyal borrowers to subsidise the much lower rates they think they have to offer to get new business," Ms Burn adds.

Research from *MoneyFacts* shows that, until eight or nine years ago, fixed mortgages were virtually unheard of. Even in 1991, only 23 out of about 100 lenders offered fixed rates. Within a year, almost half did.

The property recession forced lenders to introduce incentives to attract custom. Discounted mortgages were the first, followed by cashback mortgages. At first, these were offered only to people moving house but are now available to anyone wishing to remortgage.

In turn, this means swapping lenders has become the logical way to get a better deal, increasing

the need to penalise existing borrowers to entice new ones.

Ms Burn points out that few lenders actively try to encourage loyalty from existing borrowers. Just 12 offer preferential rates if customers have been with the lender for more than five years. Of those, all are building societies bar Northern Rock.

But she adds: "Most of these loyalty schemes still compare badly with the rates some new borrowers are being offered."

Among lenders with loyalty packages is Coventry BS, which offers a variable rate of 7.95 per cent to those who have been with the society more than 61 months. Bradford & Bingley offers a variable rate of 8.25 per cent if borrowers have been with it for two years or more, while Britannia pays a cash bonus, depending on the size of the loan and the number of years they have been with the society.

– Nic Cicuti
Mortgage survey, pages 6, 7

Abbey needs to clean up its act

Doing the housekeeping may mean one thing to most of us, but to Abbey National it clearly has a completely different meaning.

To the Abbey, a "housekeeping measure" was the term given this week to a cut of up to 0.3 per cent in the rates paid on some of its savings accounts.

The bank justified the move by arguing that interest rates are falling – although there was no evidence of this as far as variable mortgage rates are concerned: Abbey National is keeping them firmly at their current 8.7 per cent level.

Meanwhile, savers who want that little bit extra interest could do worse than take a look at Save & Prosper's optimistic launch of a Fast-Track ISA, a reference to the Individual Savings Account which is being introduced in April 1999.

– Nic Cicuti

INDEX

Mutual targets

Mutual ownership of building societies, already under attack from carpetbaggers and assorted former butchers, this week received a further knock as a company was formally launched to take over smaller institutions.

Murray Financial Corporation intend to target societies with assets between £100m and £250m following its flotation on the Alternative Investment Market. The offer of subscription will be open only to share and warrant holders in the existing Cairngorms Building Societies Investment Trust.

Meanwhile, Nationwide Building Society is steeling itself for the ballot on proposals for its demutualisation, led by Michael Hardwick, a former butcher. The society is expected to announce a substantial increase in the existing £200m annual "loyalty" benefits paid to its members just as ballot forms go out.

Artistic totems

Anthropologists won't like it, but examples of African and other Third World utensils, weapons and textiles are now being treated as art – and, as John Windsor reports on page 3, they are fetching vast sums.

Reaching peaks

Will share prices always march resolutely skywards? Jonathan Davis suggests, on page 5, that while shares have done well over long historical periods, their outperformance over some periods may mean they will underperform in others.

Liberal living

Finding the right place to live is never a straightforward matter. For many gay people, it may also involve living where your sexual orientation is not not simply tolerated but welcomed. Robert Lieberman discusses the issues and looks out for the right locations on page 11.

Thought for the day

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Tricks of the trade to test advisers

NIC CICUTTI

Almost exactly 12 months ago, together with the investigative TV series *World in Action*, this newspaper commissioned research on the way personal pensions are sold.

One of the ways *World in Action* chose to illustrate the point that many salespeople are giving poor advice to their clients was to film a "mystery shopper" with a hypothetical problem. A range of insurance company salesmen were then asked to deal with it. In many cases, the advice given was commission-driven and positively dangerous to that fictional person's financial health.

World in Action's "mystery shopper" helped expose some pretty bad practices among salespeople. The usefulness of this approach is apparently gaining new converts: the trade magazine *Financial Adviser* reports that the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the financial services watchdog, has held secret trials where "mystery shoppers" ring advisers up and tape the answers given to a fictional problem put to them.

Apparently, independent financial advisers (IFAs) are up in arms about these secret tape-recordings, claiming they are a serious infringement of civil liberties and a serious waste of IFAs' time and money.

As someone who has been both the victim and the author of a few telephone-based pranks in my time, I have some gut sympathy with the IFAs. Yet I can't help feeling that they miss the point.

At present, the main way of checking up on whether an IFA is doing a good job is to have random inspec-

tions of their paperwork. This is in addition to tight controls over what the adviser is allowed and not allowed to do at any time. Despite all these checks, there are many cases where the quality of advice given to clients remains extremely poor. In some cases, the adviser is at the very limits of what might reasonably be described as fraudulent activity.

Now that IFAs know their records may be subject to checks, some have become even more adept at verbal flim-flam, their nudges, winks and omissions as significant as any written advice they impart to their clients.

The only way to ensure that they are up to scratch is to test them face-to-face. Moreover, to prevent any dispute as to what was said, they should be taped and that tape used in evidence if necessary.

No doubt some advisers will complain that their extremely costly time should not be wasted by fake clients who don't end up as customers. That's fine by me: as a regulator, I would happily shell out a few hundred quid to an adviser that a "mystery shopper" found to be above reproach - as long as they are prepared to pay an equally large penalty if they are not.

Somehow, I have a feeling it's the regulator that would be quids in. In a new story just days after its initial report about "IFA fury over mystery shoppers", *Financial Adviser* reported this week that in an exercise carried out by Suffolk trading standards department, one third of the 27 IFAs visited by its officers were breaking key PIA rules. Oh dear: time for the hidden tape recorders, methinks.

A ND IF YOUR MIND clamps shut at the mere mention of the word £1 million, consider this: if you add up your lifetime earnings - past and future - you will see that you will almost certainly earn a fortune in your lifetime. It could add up to a million pounds - or more.

The trouble is, like most people you'll earn it - and spend it.

Of course, what you could be doing is taking this fortune and turning some of it into another fortune - the one you want to end up with.

But you'll probably say you've been too busy to attend to this yourself - or perhaps managing money today just seems too complicated ...

Maybe you think you should entrust your money to an expert. If you do, you may be disappointed. The shocking truth is many professional fund managers are not much good at what they do. Most of them do more poorly than the Stockmarket as a whole. The only certainty about letting others manage your money is that you'll let them help themselves to a chunk of it through their fees.

I N FACT THE widely-accepted Random Walk theory says that you will beat the pros at picking shares by simply blindfolding yourself and sticking a pin in the share table in your newspaper. Incredible, but true.

Look at unit trusts. The vast majority of them underperform the Stockmarket in general over time. They would have actually lost you money compared to buying shares at random!

So the question is: Why pay fat commissions and "management fees" to have a so-called professional manage your money?

What about seeking advice from a financial adviser - someone who'll give you sound and impartial advice on what best to do with your hard-earned money? Well, you're going to have to look quite hard.

Firstly, most financial advisers aren't independent. They're not even allowed to call themselves that. That's because they're employed by the big financial fund managers to sell their products, and their products alone. They're really just salesmen.

So what about those who are allowed to call themselves independent financial advisers? Consider the fact: most IFAs earn their living from commission from the products they sell. Yet some of the best investments are run by firms which pay no commission. How likely do you think it is they'll be on your IFA's shortlist of recommended investments if there's a commission-paying firm offering a remotely similar product?

But ... let's face it ... most people find today's world of personal finance too

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Douglas Moffitt, TV and Radio Financial Commentator and Editorial Director of SPI

complicated - and too baffling in short, they're stuck. They are successful in many other respects. But when it comes to investing and money management they have no real plan. All because there's no simple way to get started. That is, until now ...

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How to cover all possible get-out clauses

Just because it's your word against that of a salesman, the regulator will not always side with big insurers, reports Rachel Fixsen



Losing your wife is one of the most terrible experiences that can happen to someone. Being left to bring up two small children on your own makes things harder. But imagine then finding out you might lose the family home because your wife's life was not insured as you had always thought.

This is exactly what happened to David Lenane, a 25-year-old, self-employed electrician. His wife, Anne, died in January. At least both he and his wife had life insurance designed to pay off the mortgage if either of them died. Mr Lenane thought the couple had taken out various life policies with Refuge Assurance through one of their door-to-door salesmen.

But, to his horror, in February Mr Lenane found out that his wife's insurance would only pay out around £11,000 - nowhere near enough to pay off the £50,000 owed to Woolwich Building Society on the couple's three-bedroom home in Hemel Hempstead.

Money is tight. Since his wife's death, Mr Lenane says he has been unable to work regularly because of the demands of looking after the children and fitting in school hours. "I'm on income support and for every week I'm off work, I use £100-£150 of my savings," he says.

He complained to the insurance company, which has now been taken over by United Friendly. On close inspection, the various insurance documents held by Mr Lenane did show that the life insurance part of the endowment policy taken out to repay

the mortgage sum borrowed was - very unusually - only a single life policy to pay out if he died. Mrs Lenane did have two other life insurance policies with the same provider, but they only paid out a total of £10,984.

"We both believed we had adequate life cover to pay off the house," says Mr Lenane. He

freely admits neither he nor his wife were financial experts, and says they simply believed what the Refuge salesmen told them about the cover they were buying.

United Friendly says the Lenane's application for a joint life policy was turned down. And although his wife's health was not particularly good at the time the insurance was taken out, she was not suffering from anything

which appeared to be life-threatening, he says.

The complaint seems likely to be taken to the PIA (Personal Investment Authority) Ombudsman - the industry's watchdog - if United Friendly cannot settle the matter with Mr Lenane. The company indicated this week that it did not accept Mr Lenane's version of events and is not therefore prepared to settle.

But, all too often, people

who believe they have joint life

policies in fact turn out only to be covered for a single life. Mr Holland says, "If this only comes to light when a spouse has died, an emotional crisis becomes compounded by a financial disaster."

What happens when it's just your word against that of an insurance company or financial services provider? Are you really expected to read and understand all the small print of a life insurance policy you buy? Can you afford to rely on verbal information given by the salesmen?

"We don't rule in favour of the company just because they say 'A,'" says Tony Holland, the PIA Ombudsman. "A case depends on many things, including what other evidence the person making the complaint has and whether there was a full fact find conducted by the salesperson," he says.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

When dealing with insurance, remember:

- Using an insurance broker or independent financial adviser could help you avoid buying inappropriate insurance cover.
- Make sure any insurer you deal with is a member of the Association of British Insurers. The ABI has a code of conduct which ensures claims are dealt with promptly and fairly.
- Buy from insurers which belong to the insurance

ombudsman scheme (or PIA ombudsman scheme for life insurance)

- If a claim is refused, complain to the insurance company. If you are still not satisfied, take your grievance to the relevant ombudsman. If the insurance provider does not belong to the ombudsman scheme, the matter may have to be resolved in court. Consult a solicitor.

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This Marka mask from Mali (left) is worth £1,400, while the Makonde Virgin Mary is valued at £700

Tribal values

Collect to Invest: Under Western eyes, and carefully placed spotlights, a shield becomes high art. Ignore anthropologists' objections and buy, advises John Windsor

You do not have to be an anthropologist to invest in tribal art. Being a Western aesthete will do. Until recently, only carved wooden sculpture - face masks and figures of people and animals - fetched fine art prices in the salerooms. The rest - weapons, domestic utensils, textiles, bead jewellery - were rated not as art but as anthropological specimens.

Now, home makers and interior decorators seeking simple, sensational objects to display in sparsely furnished loft spaces have broadened the market. Install a plinth, apply a spotlight, and a decorated tribal shield becomes art.

Buyers at next month's tribal art auctions and Tribal Art Fair in London would do well to study prices realised at the most recent auctions for examples of the rising value of anthropology. At Bonhams in December, an Australian Aboriginal stone *tchuringa* a little over 700s high - a ritual object traditionally hidden out of sight of women - fetched a whopping £2,990, nearly four times its pre-

sale estimate. Five years previously it had fetched a mere £150 at a Phillips auction.

The reason for the price jump? It was incised on both sides with a network of parallel lines linked with concentric circular medallions. To an Aborigine, it tells of the mythic "dream time". In Western eyes, that's art. The prices of Aboriginal bark paintings bearing comparable designs are going through the roof at Sotheby's annual June sales of Aboriginal art in Melbourne.

Their purpose but seemingly paradoxical allure that tribal art (still sometimes described as "primitive" art) exerts in our advanced post-Renaissance culture is explained by two examples from art history, one recent, the other occurring in 1907.

In that year, Picasso first clapped eyes on African carvings in the Palais du Trocadéro's ethnographic museum. He was transfixed, and his art transformed. The immediate result was that his five nude female figures, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, then in progress, convulsed into

hard-angled shapes with heads like African masks.

For 30 years, the canny Picasso refused to acknowledge his artistic debt. "African art? Never heard of it!" he would say. But when the secret came out, prices of tribal masks and figures began to rise.

Anthropological specimens in general did not truly enter the Western art market until the Royal Academy's blockbuster exhibition *Africa: The Art of a Continent* in 1995-96 - curated by an artist, Tom Phillips. The exhibition outraged anthropologists. Here were tribal artefacts from Western private collections that had been torn from their archaeological context and were now being hailed as art by Western aesthetes. Phillips retorted impishly that the Venus de Milo had been torn from context, too. "The test of art," he said, "is whether it can survive independently of context."

The biggest controversy centred on the exhibition's carved five-seated stool from the Ngombe area of Zaire, which was pegged into its stand vertically, instead of horizontally, as if it was an abstract sculpture. One scholar fumed: "Duchamp has gone to Africa." But the die was cast. The exhibition stitched art irrevocably into "tribal art". That five-seater still stands provocatively upright in the home of its owner, the London tribal art dealer Peter Adler, son of the harmonica player. Customers buy his earth-coloured geometrically patterned Shwowa raffia cloths from Zaire (£250-£600) and big Fante flags from Ghana (£400-£2,200) in order to frame and hang in sitting rooms in Islington and loft spaces in Farringdon. Senufo beds from Upper Volta, long planks of wood with headboards (£1,000-£3,000), serve as coffee tables.

All of Adler's stock is old, that is, pre-1950. It has come from reputable Western collections. He never buys from Africa. Authenticity is all. His 32-year-old business, *Friends of Friends*, has sold £1m worth of tribal art since 1988. To know about ethical investments and savings

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It would be unfair to say the anoraks were out in force at the Internet World 98 exhibition over the last few days. For one, thing it has been far too hot to wear an anorak.

Indeed, technology for the sake of technology appeared to take a back seat at the exhibition, with a much greater focus on, in particular, software developments aimed at boosting e-commerce in all its forms, business-to-business and business-to-consumer.

This was not a show for the consumer. It was aimed at people in the internet business, or those wanting to be in the internet business.

However, anybody who does not believe that, within the next decade, they are likely to be monitoring their bank account, ordering their shopping, booking their holiday and buying their insurance and cinema tickets

over the internet would have had their certainties shaken up.

A survey by Datamonitor

on behalf of the show's sponsors, Mecklermedia, forecasts 100 per cent growth per annum in consumer use of the internet in the UK over the next five years.

By 2002, individual consumers will be responsible for generating 65 per cent of UK internet services turnover, a market which is likely to be worth a total of £2bn. Within that figure, on-line shopping is expected to grow from £6.7m in 1997 to more than £600m by 2002.

Several stands at the exhibition were displaying software designed to allow secure payments over the world wide web. Among them, NetBank is a privately owned company which offers secure, on-line card clearance facilities. It currently

has the capability to process Visa and Mastercard credit cards, plus American Express, Diners Club, Eurocard, JCB, Switch, Delta and all Visa-affiliated debit cards.

You can check out exactly how the company's products work on its website but be sure you spell the name correctly - netbank with an "x". If you type in "netbank" with a "k" you will find yourself on the website of a bank in Atlanta, Georgia.

The internet may have created a global market but the world does not have a global currency. Yet, well, actually it does. WorldPay's multi-currency micro-payment system allows low-value purchases to be made in the lowest denomination of more than 100 currencies. Payments are secured using a WorldPay Smartcard.

Even older-established names in the communications business are leaping on the e-commerce bandwagon. Cable & Wireless has launched an e-commerce service licensed from US group Open Market. Among its first customers is Oxford University Press, with one of the most comprehensive ranges of academic books in the world.

Perhaps of more immediate use to the general consumer is Yell, the website of Yellow Pages. You can probably work out what this offers. However, in addition to the more traditional directory function, the site is developing "transactional sites" to allow small businesses to offer us their products on the web.

Netbank: www.netbank.com
WorldPay: www.worldpay.com
Yellow Pages: www.yell.co.uk

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BRIAN
TORA

Why new issues take off

It seems you cannot win in this business. By any stretch of the imagination, the flotation of Thomson Travel was a raging success. Yet much of the focus of attention last Monday, when dealings commenced, was on the administrative muddles that dogged the allocation of shares to private investors who had endeavoured to support the issue.

If ever a company was a victim of its own success, Thomson Travel was. More than a million people registered for shares. It was, by all accounts, the most popular share issue since Rail Track.

But wait a second. Just how many share issues have there been since Rail Track? If you exclude the demutualisations, none of any size. And here we have the problem: a dearth of new issues. So, when one comes along with a well-known name, offering obvious attractions such as discounts on holidays, it is hardly surprising if the punters line up in droves.

At present, there is not much sign of more flotation activity. If anything, the trend is the other way. Mergers among motor manufacturers, talk of telecoms giants tying together, there is plenty going on in the world of bids and deals.

And then you have the share buy-backs. With the ending of any ability to reclaim tax on dividends paid on ordinary shares for all investors fairly soon, it was inevitable that the companies would choose this method of rewarding shareholders.

We do not have the range of large, privately owned companies that exists in continental Europe to provide a ready market for flotation. Of course, that may change – at least so far as our neighbours across the English Channel are concerned. A growing appetite for equity issues in Europe could stimulate a rash of flotations.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee

BEST BORROWING RATES

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
INSTANT ACCESS						
Clydebank	0800 133149	0.95% for 1 year	65%	0.75%	FreshMP for adv up to 85%	
Wrexham	0800 000008	5.40% to 30.01	75%	225%		
Northern Rock	0845 605 0500	6.15% to 19.03	95%	225%	No MP for adv up to 85%	

VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES

Scarborough BS	0890 133149	1.50% for 1 year	65%	225%	£250 rebate --
Finsburypage	0800 000008	4.45% to 30.00	75%	225%	
Northern Rock	0845 605 0500	5.65% to 19.03	95%	225%	No MP for adv up to 85%

FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES

Northern Rock	0845 605 0500	3.85% to 18.00	95%	225%	No MP for adv up to 85%
Halifax	0800 101110	6.75% to 21.01	95%	225%	No high lending fee (MP)
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	5.65% for 5 years	90%	225%	No high lending fee

FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES

Scarborough BS	01902 317465	2.25% to 18.00	95%	225%	6% of advance repaid
Finsburypage	0800 000008	5.50% to 30.01	95%	225%	
Northern Rock	0845 605 0500	5.65% to 19.03	95%	225%	Refund val

UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS

Telephone	APR %	Read monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs
		With Insurance
Northern Rock	0845 421421	9.9% H
Yorkshire Bank	0800 202122	12.5%
Direct Line	0181 600 9556	12.8% A

SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)

Telephone	APR %	Max CTV Advance	Term
Cheshire Bank	0800 240224	9.7%	Up to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121121	10.7%	22.5% to £10K
First Direct	0845 100103	11.25%	£5K to Reg Up to 40 years

OVERDRAFTS

Telephone	Account	% pm	APR %	% yrs	APR %	Authorised	Unauthorised
Alliance & Leek	0500 955565	Alliance	0.95%	12.00%	2.25%	20.8%	
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 804004	Direct charges	-	11.0%	-	25.5%	
Nationwide BS	0500 302010	Overaccount	0.97%	12.25%	2.10%	20.8%	

CREDIT CARDS

Telephone	Card Type	Rate 5 pm	APR %	Annual fee	Free min fee	Period	Income
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	0.5695%	5.9074%	NB	54 days	220K
RBS Advert	0800 077770	Visa	0.594%	7.304%	NB	58 days	220K
Co-operative Bank	0800 105000	Advantage Visa	0.609%	8.024%	NB	0 days	220K

GOLD CARDS

Telephone	Card Type	Rate 5 pm	APR %	Annual fee	Free min fee	Period	Income
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	0.5695%	5.9074%	NB	54 days	220K
Co-operative Bank	0845 212121	Base Rate Visa	0.60%	11.90%	£120	48 days	220K
RBS Advert	0800 077770	Visa	0.60%	7.304%	NB	58 days	220K

STORE CARDS

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods
John Lewis	1.39%	18.0%
BHS	1.39%	28.0%
Marks & Spencer	01244 681081	2.0%

A – Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's guiding customers

APR – Annualised percentage rate

ASD – Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance

CV – Credit history and current insurance

H – Higher rates applies if insurance not arranged

CTV – Credit to value

MP – Mortgage indemnity premium

N – Introductory rate for a limited period

U – Unemployment insurance

* If completion is before 30.4.98

All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01622 500677 14 May 1998

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5/PERSONAL FINANCE

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
INSTANT ACCESS					
Clydebank	0800 133149	Savers	£1	6.75%	Day
Wrexham	0800 222300	Card Saver	£100	5.50%	Year
Street & Swindon BS	0845 410553	Branch instant	£100	5.00%	Year
Lands & House BS</td					

Home in on the best deal

A bewildering choice of mortgage deals confronts borrowers these days.

Tony Lyons explains how to pick the right type

The house buying season is currently in full swing. Estate agents throughout the country are seeing plenty of customers wanting to buy a new home. And mortgage lenders have plenty of money which they are eager to lend.

Buying a house is probably the largest single purchase any of us ever makes but it can be a stressful and expensive business. Not only do you have to deal with smooth-talking estate agents, you will also probably need a solicitor and then, unless you have a pile of cash, you need to arrange a mortgage.

Once upon a time, the choice of mortgage was easy. There was the conventional repayment loan or an endowment mortgage. Both had variable interest rates, changing as lenders moved their rates up and down with the general economic climate.

Nowadays, it is much more complicated, with many needing to seek advice from either a lender or a mortgage broker. While most will find you a suitable package, in the past you were never sure if you were being sold a mortgage that best suited your wallet or one that earned the provider the highest commission. This was especially true when it came to endowment mortgages.

Now, most leading providers have signed up to a voluntary code of conduct, devised by the Council of Mortgage Lenders, which stipulates that the lender should receive full details of the charges and the reasons why a particular mortgage was recommended. The Government is keeping a watchful eye on how the new code operates but has warned that if it fails to curb any excesses in the market, it will step in with legislation and that mortgage lending will come under the aegis of the Financial Services Authority, the new super regulator.

So, how do you decide on the type of mortgage that best suits you? "The right type of home loan for anyone will depend on their individual circumstances," says Siobhan Hotten, marketing manager of John Charcol, an independent financial



Ideal situations: Borrowers need to shop around for the right mortgage

adviser and the largest mortgage broker in the UK. "So much will depend on the clients' attitude to risk."

The most favoured means of paying off a mortgage are:

Repayment method: the traditional means of repayment, where every monthly payment goes towards paying off the interest and some of the capital.

"This suits most people, especially if they have a low-risk attitude and are in salaried occupations," Ms Hotten says. However, it is inflexible. Nowadays, we tend to move house every six or seven years. Someone in their late twenties can expect to move five or six times before they retire. But in the early days of a repayment mortgage, only a small amount of capital is repaid. If

you move house, you will probably have to take out a new loan, maybe for another 20 or 25 years. This will mean you go on extending the time you will be paying off your borrowings.

Interest-only mortgages: more flexible, as you can transfer the mortgage when you move house. You may have to top up the loan every time you move or take out an additional mortgage and you will have to repay the capital at the end of the period.

Repayment of the sum borrowed is normally done through one or other saving schemes, the most tax efficient of which are:

With-profits endowments: where you pay premiums into a life assurance plan. Nowadays, the low-cost versions of these plans assume the insurance company will

continue to pay at least 80 per cent of the current bonus rate – that is the profit you make on the policy – and forecast growth of 7.5 per cent a year.

"These policies were oversold in the 1980s," comments Ms Hotten, "and have been heavily criticised. They are suitable for those with a low attitude to risk. They offer valuable life cover and are quite often packaged with critical illness cover, protecting you if you are unable to work."

The past criticism was due to the high commission rates paid to advisers, often equal to the first year's premium, and the decline in bonus rates in recent years due to falling inflation and the consequent decline in yields on fixed-interest stocks. But they appear to have stabilised and insurance companies are now more realistic on the growth rates they are forecasting for their life funds.

A 30-year-old non-smoker should expect to pay around £75 a month or less with one of the better insurers for a 25-year, low-cost with-profit endowment of £50,000, or under £80 a month if it includes critical illness cover, which pays a lump sum on diagnosis of a life-threatening illness.

PEP mortgages: where you pay into a personal equity plan (PEP), using the proceeds to pay off the capital whenever you have accumulated enough. Now that we know PEPs have been ring fenced with no lifetime limit, they have come back into popularity.

"This type of repayment suits someone

who is aware of the risks involved with equity investment. When Individual Savings Accounts arrive next year," says Ms Hotten, "there is no reason why they could not be used for repaying a mortgage."

Pension mortgages, where you repay the capital out of the lump sum you are allowed to take out of your pension fund when you retire. Under the rules, up to a quarter of your accumulated pension can be taken in cash at retirement.

"These are best suited to the highly paid who have high net worth, as it means that a substantial sum will be paid over to a mortgage lender at a time when most will be looking for ways to maximise their income," Ms Hotten warns.

There are any number of inducements being offered to mortgage borrowers these days. Cash backs, discounts and fixed-rate home loans are very popular, but do watch out for penalties. In addition, some of the newer entrants into the mortgage market, including Virgin and Kleinwort Benson, are offering flexible lending packages. These are modern "lifestyle accounts" where, as long as you stay within their rules, your home loan is treated as just part of your overall borrowing and you can pay as little or as much as you can afford so long as mortgage is paid off in due course.

"Whatever you do, make sure you shop around for the home loan that meets your needs and at a price you can afford," Ms Hotten says. "If you find it confusing or too complex, go and see a truly professional adviser."

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New rules to protect borrowers

Facing statutory regulations, most lenders have signed up to a voluntary code of conduct. Tony Bonsignore wonders if the industry can put its own house in order

Despite the fact that buying a house is the biggest single investment most of us ever make, mortgage borrowers have historically been afforded relatively little protection from poor advisers. The 1986 Financial Services Act, the cornerstone of investor protection, is very welcome.

The complaints procedure for borrowers has also been overhauled. Previously, anyone with a grievance who got their mortgage through a bank or building society could go to the bank or building society ombudsman.

But if they had bought their mortgage elsewhere they had no means of registering a complaint and no chance of any compensation. The CML has responded by setting up the CML Arbitration Service, which is free for borrowers with complaints against any lender.

This led to increasing accusations that some people were being sold mortgages they didn't fully understand or were not best suited to their needs. Worse still, there was no independent arbitration service if a mortgage broker was used. All in all, it added up to pretty poor deal for the borrower.

This situation did not escape the Labour Party which, in the run-up to last year's general election, threatened to regulate the industry directly, a move which could seriously eat into lenders' profits.

Faced with this threat, and mounting criticism from consumer organisations, the mortgage industry finally took action with the launch of a new Mortgage Code.

Put together by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML), the code has been in operation for just over a year. It attempts to put in place a detailed framework which all lenders must follow.

To begin with, mortgage advice is now split into three types and advisers have to tell you which type you are receiving. An adviser can therefore offer you advice on just one mortgage, information on a particular company's range of mortgages, or full advice on the whole market.

If the latter, it must be backed in writing, and failure to give proper advice can lead to a claim for compensation. The idea is that you will not be fooled into thinking you have received full advice when you haven't, a major criticism of the old system.

The mortgage market is hugely complex. The theory is that under the new code, if you choose not to take advice, then you have no cause for complaint. If, however, you choose to take advice which subsequently turns out to be poor, then you have a legitimate complaint.

Under the code, advisers must give clear information on key aspects of any deal.

Council of Mortgage Lenders: 0171-437 0655

7/MORTGAGE SURVEY

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 16 MAY 1998
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Flexible alternatives to traditional bank and building society mortgages are on the increase. Simon Read reports

Move off the high street

Richard Branson may not profit from his new loan

Richard Branson is probably the nation's favourite businessman. He's long been aware of his personal popularity, expanding his Virgin empire on the strength of it. But his move into mortgages last year could be his first big miscalculation.

Why? Because Virgin is just one of many new companies hoping to make a mint out of home loans. Despite the hype, Virgin's One Account, launched last October, has gained barely 1,000 customers, a fraction of the amount most lenders can rack up. Coventry Building Society, for instance, lent more than £500m last year, almost 10 times as much as Virgin.

Other new mortgage lenders are as well known as Virgin – such as Direct Line and Legal & General. The new competition means anyone sticking to building societies or banks for their mortgage is missing out on potentially much better deals.

What is the spin these lenders have brought to the mortgage market? Flexibility for one. This has been embraced by the likes of Legal & General, Virgin Direct, Kleinwort Benson and Bank of Scotland Mortgage Direct. Each offers a slightly different deal, but the basic con-

cept of allowing you to pay off the mortgage when you want to and to borrow against it when you need to, is common to all. In effect, they let you run your mortgage as a current account.

According to Virgin, the fact that people keep savings and borrowings separate is costing them money. Analysts at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson claim that collectively we're losing £2.1bn a year because a different rate of interest is charged to borrowers than is paid out to savers. In effect, banks and building societies are taking a turn, or profit, on our cash.

Virgin says the new home loans that give you an overdraft facility are better. "While it's in the interest of the traditional bank and building societies to charge different rates of interest for savings and borrowings, it certainly doesn't benefit their customers," says Jayne-Anne Gadhia, managing director of Virgin One. "Our customers like the fact that they are constantly minimising their borrowing and can repay their mortgage several years early."

The Virgin One account is run by the Royal Bank of Scotland, the same staid institution that owns Direct Line, which has

also introduced a new deal. "We provide a simple, straightforward product with no hidden fees, tie-ins or penalties," Direct Line's Stephen Geraghty says.

The two approaches are vastly different, yet offer equally interesting deals for the right borrower. But that's the nature of the market today. Many of the new mortgage lenders want to grab their own little pocket of customers. The flexible mortgage is attractive but will not be right for everyone. The simple no-frills approach can be a much better option for some.

There is a drawback to flexible mortgages: the cost. When you consider that both Kleinwort Benson and Virgin Direct charge 8.2 per cent, that doesn't seem bad compared with, say, Halifax's standard variable rate of 8.7 per cent. But the rate seems less competitive against Direct Line's 7.94 per cent.

In fact, few new borrowers pay the standard rate. Most naturally prefer to enjoy the lower cost of a discount or fixed-rate mortgage. The good news is that these are available from most high street lenders.

Another growing band of new mortgage lenders are known as the nonconformists.

Corporation, The Money Store, Preferred Mortgages, Southern Pacific and Transamerica. But altruistic they're not. They are simply mopping up a gap in the market, and charging borrowers a pretty penny for their trouble.

You should expect to pay around 10 per cent for a loan from these lenders. That is high but as Michael Bolton at National Home Loans points out: "We hope that after two to three years borrowers can switch to a

The buyer's market takes off

Fierce competition among lenders means some great deals for borrowers. Abigail Montrose seeks them out

Mortgage lenders are bending over backwards to attract new business, which is good news for home buyers. The range of products on the market has never been better and there are some great deals to be had.

Currently, fixed-rate deals are attracting most interest. Recent hikes in interest rates have seen borrowers looking for security and, with many lenders expecting interest rates to be lower in the medium term, fixed-rate mortgages are being attractively priced.

Fixed-rate mortgages are usually for two or five years, with the five-year market offering some particularly attractive deals. One of the cheapest five-year fixes on offer is 5.99 per cent from Northern Rock. But watch out for the hefty £495 application fee, and the compulsory buildings and contents insurance. You will

also be tied to Northern Rock for two years after the fixed rate has elapsed.

Attractive five-year rates are also offered by Abbey National, John Charcol, Nationwide and Halifax but, again, you are expected to remain with the lender for a further year or two once the fix has ended.

For those who want to ensure their mortgage repayments do not rise above a certain level but want to benefit if interest rates fall, a capped-rate mortgage is the answer. Among the best deals on offer Bradford & Bingley's four-year capped rate of 6.25 per cent. The arrangement fee is £295 and there are no compulsory insurances but you will be expected to stay with the society for a further two years.

If you want to avoid redemption penalties after the capped period, you

could consider John Charcol's 6.55 per cent cap, which runs until end of June 2003, or Halifax's 6.8 per cent capped mortgage where the cap lasts until end of August 2002.

For those who want a variable-rate mortgage, there are plenty of good discounts available. "One of the lowest two-year deals on offer is the Scarborough Building Society's 3.99 discount," says Simon Tyler of mortgage brokers, Chase de Vere Mortgage Management. "If you're looking for the deepest discount over two years this is currently it. But with compulsory insurance it might not be the best deal around."

Those looking for a five-year discount could consider Nationwide's 1.35 per cent discount. While not be the largest discount around, Nationwide's standard-variable rate is 8.1 per cent, against the average

for all lenders of 8.7 per cent, which brings the rate down to 6.75 per cent.

"Another option is cashbacks, although these are less popular than they used to be," says Mr Tyler. But for those who like this option, perhaps because they plan to use the cashback to fund the deposit, there are good deals around.

Northern Rock is offering an 8 per cent cashback on its standard variable-rate mortgage and Leeds & Holbeck is offering a 7 per cent cashback on loans up to 85 per cent. In both cases, early redemption penalties last for six years.

John Charcol: 0800 718191; Leeds & Holbeck: 0500 225777; Abbey National: 0800 555100; Northern Rock: 0845-605 0500; Halifax: 0800 101110; Nationwide: 0800 302010; Scarborough: 0990 133149; Bradford & Bingley: 0800 570800

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The people's car for toffs

Road test Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph, by John Simister

A Rolls-Royce, they say, is the best car in the world. Nonsense, I say. A Rolls-Royce has always been a desirable and lovingly created thing, but the best car in the world? Hardly, especially when the standard Rolls-Royce offering has barely changed since 1980. The motor car, as Rolls-Royce always calls it, has become out of date, off the pace, a state of no one's art but its maker's. Such was the status quo until now. But something momentous has happened. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has produced an all-new Rolls-Royce motor car, and it proves that the Rolls engineers have listened well.

Rolls-Royce saloons are usually called Silver somethings, and this time it's the turn of a seraph to be silvered. Its looks are an amalgam of the just-deceased Silver Spirit/Silver Spur, the earlier Silver Shadow whose side creases are echoed in the Seraph, and the grandiose Silver Cloud.

The result is a car which looks modern, but which couldn't possibly be anything other than a Rolls-Royce. The nose is still high and proud, but the grille is squatter, less sharp-edged and more like an ancient Greek temple than ever.

Rolls-Royce was about to be bought by BMW, although this is not cut and



dried. VW has made an offer, and a final decision will be made by shareholders in June. If successful, the bid would be the ultimate in ironies: the makers of the People's Car owning the Toff's Car.

Up to now, Rolls-Royce has been leaning heavily on BMW for components and expertise, which is why the old Rolls-Royce V8 monster-motor, 6.75 litres of low-tech, low-revving history, has gone in favour of a BMW V12 of "just" 5.4 litres. That may change in a year or so's time if the VW bid succeeds.

A German engine in the ultimate British car. The idea is hard to take, but

it certainly works on the practical level. Power is up from the old Silver Spur's 300bhp, achieved with the help of a small turbocharger, to 322bhp, achieved through being modern and efficient. The engine is practically identical to that used in the BMW 750iL, apart from the badges on the cam-covers and the calibration of the management system to suit its new surroundings. The transmission comes from the same source, as does the air-conditioning system.

There is absolutely no doubt about the provenance of the interior, though. The dashboard is gentler and curvier in

shape, and the switchgear is much more modern than before, but lustrous wood and taut, rich leather are as all-pervading as ever, the air vents are still enormous and you still don't get a rev-counter because exact engine speed should be of no concern to the Rolls-Royce driver.

To drive, the Silver Seraph is a revelation. It sounds different from before, thanks mainly to its four extra cylinders, and it is both faster and quieter, but the major transformation is in the way it copes with bumps and bends. The body structure is a 65 per cent stiffer than before, so there's none of the groan and shudder of old.

This extra body stiffness together with new suspension allow the Seraph to soak up bumps without heaving and floating. They also make this vast car feel agile and eager in a way its ship-like predecessor never could. Never has a Rolls-Royce felt so all-of-a-piece, such fun to drive, yet so comfortable for all its occupants.

The Silver Seraph has caught up with current capabilities, without losing the feeling of being a Rolls-Royce. In fact, it's closer to its maker's ideals than ever. The best car in the world? Now, it's not such a daft idea after all.

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: £155,000.
Engine: 5.479cc V12, 24 valves, 322bhp at 5,000rpm.
Transmission: five-speed automatic gearbox, rear-wheel drive.
Performance: top speed 140mph, 0-60 in 6.9sec, 11-16mpg.

Rivals

BMW 750iL: £75,050. Similar engine to the Seraph, half the price and it comes complete with a TV. Delightful to drive, but nothing like the presence.

Daimler Super Eight: £62,775. Supercharged V8 from the Jaguar XJR, in a longer and more luxurious body. The closest you'll get to a Rolls-Royce ambience without buying a Rolls-Royce.

Mercedes-Benz S600: £102,490. A V12, like the Rolls and the BMW, but bigger and more powerful. A huge car, beautifully built but hardly beautiful. New model due in the autumn.



GAVIN GREEN

Skoda's emergence as top marque in the recent JD Power customer satisfaction survey may have raised eyebrows, spoilt a few stand-up comedians' jokes and given the headline writers some fun.

But we really should not be all that surprised. Skodas are now Czech Volkswagens, rather than a testament to the technical shortcomings of Communism. "The brand name from hell", as a marketing magazine once termed it, has now teamed up with the brand name loved by the brand gurus, so a good JD Power showing was always on the cards.

Yet it can't just be the VW influence.

Look at the results in detail, and you'll find Skoda well on top and Volkswagen way behind, just above the industry average. Audi, VW's blue-chip brand, is a notch higher, still well behind Skoda. Clearly, then, customer satisfaction isn't just about good products. Are Skodas really better than VWs and Audis - or Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs and Toyotas? They are not.

But they do have very different dealers, and a big chunk of customer satisfaction is obviously to do with the selling and servicing experience. Skoda dealers tend to be small and family owned, and situated in rural areas. In short, they are old-fashioned garages. They know their customers by their first names - and if their buildings and facilities are out-of-date, then so are their standards of courtesy. A large number are ex-Rover dealers, ditched when the British maker pruned its dealer network.

Rover, along with most other major car makers in Britain, has been shedding small, rural, family-run garages in favour of big, multi-franchise groups. They can afford bigger sites in prosperous, highly populated areas. They can afford better equipment to service cars, including high-tech computer monitoring. They can afford quality carpets, nice furniture, pretty receptionists, highly trained salesmen, lots of demo cars, big signs in the latest corporate livery - and the dealer principal has enough spare time to be able to take the odd "best sales performance of the month" car company-backed prize to the Caribbean.

Car dealerships are now slicker, more modern and more professional than ever. Which is why many people would rather deal with the friendly little bloke down the road, whose father's father set up the garage - never mind that the receptionist is his mum, the carpet in the showroom has seen better days, and they serve tea in mugs not coffee from an espresso machine.

As further proof, another maker renowned for its small, family-run provincial garages - Subaru - notched up second place in the JD Power study. Rover, Ford and Vauxhall - whose names used to be part of any small provincial British town, before local garages lost the franchises - all came near the bottom of the table.

The move to larger, more "professional" purveyors of goods is not confined to selling cars, of course. The trend is just as pronounced in groceries and white goods. It's the way the world is going, and no amount of consumer surveys showing that most of us would rather deal with small, personal outfits, close to our homes rather than a long drive away, is going to change things. Fewer, bigger dealers suit the "think big" mindset of our business leaders.

Customer satisfaction - the holy grail of all companies - is only a goal if it fits within the narrow confines of corporate thinking. Modern customer satisfaction is giving the customer not what he or she really wants, but what the company is prepared to offer.

Norton returns... at 225mph

The troubled marque has plans for a superbike - but a German rival could trump it, writes Roland Brown

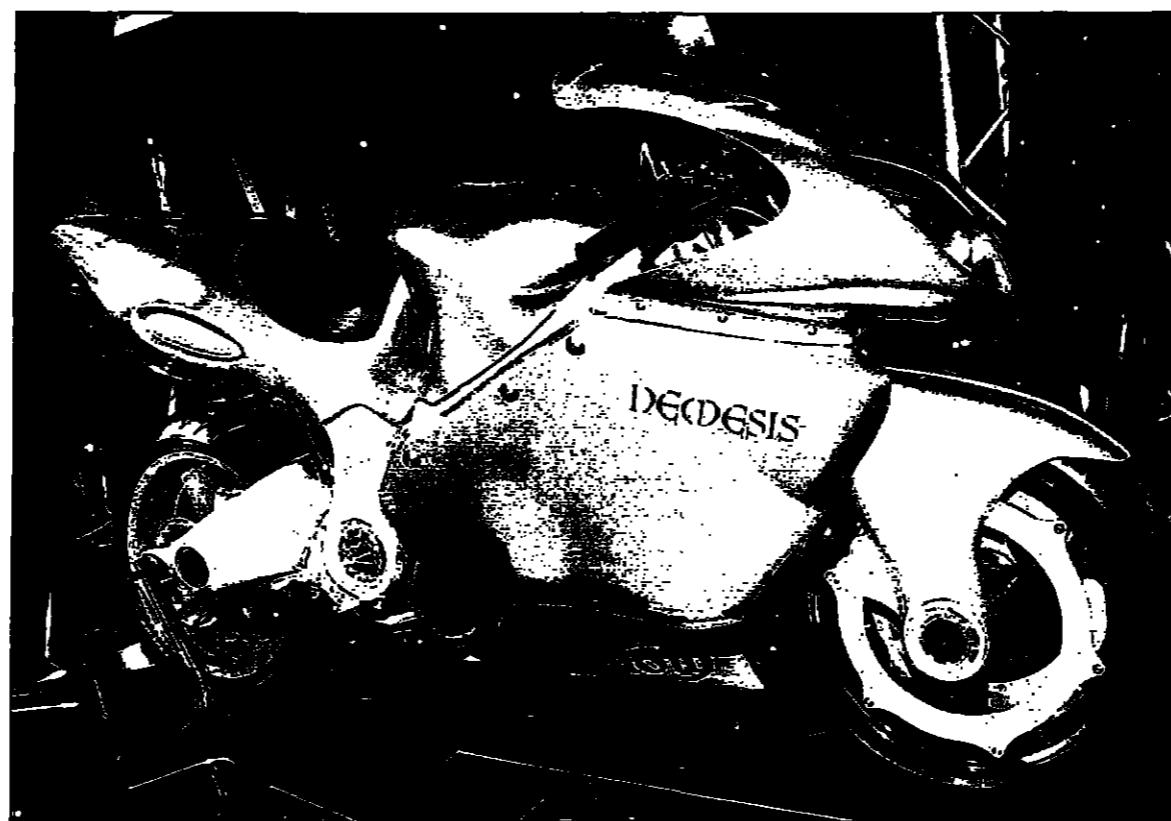
Once-mighty Norton is celebrating its centenary this year amid controversy that must be causing the founder, James Lansdowne Norton, to turn in his grave.

Norton Motors International, owned by the Canadian-based Aquilini property group, recently revealed a remarkable 1,500cc V8 superbike, the Nemesis, to be produced at its factory at Shenstone, in Staffordshire, later this year.

If this does reach production it will signify a tremendous comeback for Norton. The V8's 260bhp output and 225mph top speed would make it by far the world's fastest and most powerful superbike.

But as usual with Norton, the story is more complex than it seems. The Nemesis is a concept bike that requires much development before being ready for production. Meanwhile another new Norton is already being produced - by Norton Motors Deutschland, the former German importer, which owns rights to the Norton name in most European countries except Britain. The C652SM is being built by Tigcraft, of Farnborough.

In contrast to the futuristic Nemesis, the C652SM is a simple roadster powered by the single-cylinder engine from BMW's F650. Despite being assembled in Farnborough, the C652SM cannot be sold in Britain. When the first 15 bikes



are completed at the end of this month they will be shipped to Norton Motors Deutschland's base near Munich. Most have been sold to German enthusiasts.

There is no love lost between the Canadian owners of Norton Motors International and Joe Seifert, boss of Norton Motors Deutschland. Seifert and Tigcraft have been issued with writs attempting to prevent them from producing the C652SM, although NMI accepts that Seifert has registered the Norton name in some countries.

Seifert, an enthusiast who sells spares for old Nortons and races one in classic events, is convinced that while the Nemesis may attract investment, it will never reach production. "It seems remarkable that NMI should present these proposals as the basis for a serious business plan to prospective shareholders," he says.

The Canadian-owned firm's proposals are certainly ambitious. According to NMI, the Nemesis will outperform Honda's CBR1100XX Super Blackbird, currently the world's fastest bike, by almost 50mph. It will also incorporate features such as a magnesium frame, active suspension and a push-button gear-change and clutch, none of which has yet been seen on a production bike.

According to NMI, the Nemesis will

be the flagship of a range including four-cylinder superbikes, a cruiser, the Commando, with a different 1500cc V8 engine, and single-cylinder models. All have been designed by Al Melling, of Melling Consultancy Design in Rochdale, Lancashire.

Melling, 54, says he has worked for

many leading car and bike manufacturers.

He is known in the automotive world for his work on a controversial but

ultimately successful V8 engine for the sports car firm TVR.

It may be relevant that the specification of the Nemesis is very similar to that of the Melling-designed 1500cc V8 announced several years ago by March, an American-owned firm that recently formed a partnership with Norton. That bike was due for production in 1996 but was never built. March's UK base at

Bicester in Oxfordshire is now closed. Unlike the exotic Nemesis, the rival Norton firm's C652SM is a down-to-earth single-cylinder roadster that combines the 652cc BMW engine with a chassis based on that of Tigcraft's successful single-cylinder racing bike.

The liquid-cooled, four-valve engine sits in a rigid tubular steel frame, which holds high-quality conventional cycle parts.

Styling is retro, with traditional Norton silver paint and low handlebars. The BMW engine produces a maximum of 47bhp - enough for a top speed of just over 100mph. The Norton is lively, pulling cleanly from low revs and reaching about 80mph before typical single-cylinder vibration becomes tiresome.

Where this Norton really scores is with its race-bred handling. The single's

light weight (just 158kg) and taut suspension combine with its sticky tyres and powerful single front Brembo disc brake to make it great fun on a twisty road - though there are plenty of cheaper and more powerful machines on the market.

One problem for British Norton enthusiasts is that because the C652SM cannot legally be sold in this country it would have to be bought from Norton Motors Deutschland (0149 8151 28 708) and personally imported, with the buyer paying VAT on top of the basic price of DM 18,100 - a total of just over £7,000.

Alternatively, those looking for a more powerful Norton could wait for the 225mph Nemesis V8 to reach production. Such an event would be the perfect way to celebrate Norton's centenary - but, sadly, the wait may be a long one.



Worn to be wild

You've got the classic bike, but you're still only half way there, reckons Giles Anderson

The burgeoning interest in classic bikes has sparked a resurgence in the whole classic style. And you have to have the gear to match the bike. "People are interested in the look," says Roy Buosi, owner of Bullet - a classic bike specialist shop. "They're after the cool-looking image of the ton-up boys who used to head up the M1 at 100mph in the 1950s." It also gives the impression that you've been riding for a long time, according to Mr Buosi. "In bike circles there's a snob factor. You have to have the right badge or they won't talk to you."

First on the wish list for classic bike owners is the Belstaff Trail Master jacket costing £89.99. This black wax cotton jacket comes straight from the pre-leather 1940s. "It's generally for the middle-aged born-again bikers who remember the name from their teens, says Belstaff's John Wakefield. Underneath this, you need some Lewis leathers - jacket or trousers both priced from £100 upwards. For authentic boots, look to the £99.99 Alt Berg Albion Classic, which haven't changed since the Fifties. David's helmet, the padding-basin Classic, costs upwards of £80 and is the most traditional of the new ones on offer. These don't conform to modern standards and are only for exhibition use. Davida also does a Classic Jet helmet, a legal version of the Classic. "We get a range of people," says David Fiddaman, managing director of Davida, "from those in their early 40s who used to be into motorcycles; those just like style, to scooter riders." For the final dated touch, you need the Aviator Retro goggles, also available from Davida.

Stylish they may be, but Richard Rosenthal, of *Classic Bike* magazine, wouldn't recommend these outfitts for the serious rider. He says a lot of the old-fashioned leather wears through quickly and padding-basin helmets give you no protection down the back or the front of the head. But Roy Buosi remains unrepentant: "Safety is not the issue, it's the look."

Bullet - 0171-736 3811; Belstaff stockists - 01782 839 879; Victory Motorcycles - 0171-284 2074; Alt Berg - 01748 850615; Davida mail order catalogue - 0151 678 4656.

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ABA 822	1,850	FEC 821	1,000	76	PAB 39B	900
ABA 823	1,850	FEC 821	1,000	76	PAB 39B	900
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The school's fine, but the journey ...

You may live in your dream house, but if you spend two hours each day driving the children back and forth, maybe it's time to think about moving. Mary Wilson talked to people who fought free of the school run

Running children to and from school can take an inordinate amount of time out of the day, especially if you have children at more than one school. And many people who move out of London for a better quality of life find that there may be less pollution and less traffic, but they are spending more time in the car because the schools are some distance away.

Ann-Helen and Tony English had lived for 12 years in a beautiful Grade II* listed 15th-century house in Harrow Weald, Middlesex, which they and their children loved.

"It was a stunning old farmhouse, set in the middle of a massive garden," says Mrs English, who is an artist with a studio in Finsbury Park.

"However, when my daughter Dominique, who is now 10 years old, started to go to school in Hampstead, it was taking me anything from half an hour to an hour to drive her to school. And when my youngest daughter, Gabriella [now six] started at school, I was spending another half-an-hour getting through Hampstead Village, and then the same again getting to work."

"I would get to my studio and then have

to turn around to go home to pick her up again at 12. It was terrible, and bad for everybody's health".

Although the family did not want to leave their lovely house and garden, they realised that they had to move nearer to the schools to improve the quality of their lives. So they have now bought a Thirties mock-Tudor house opposite Golders Hill Park, NW11.

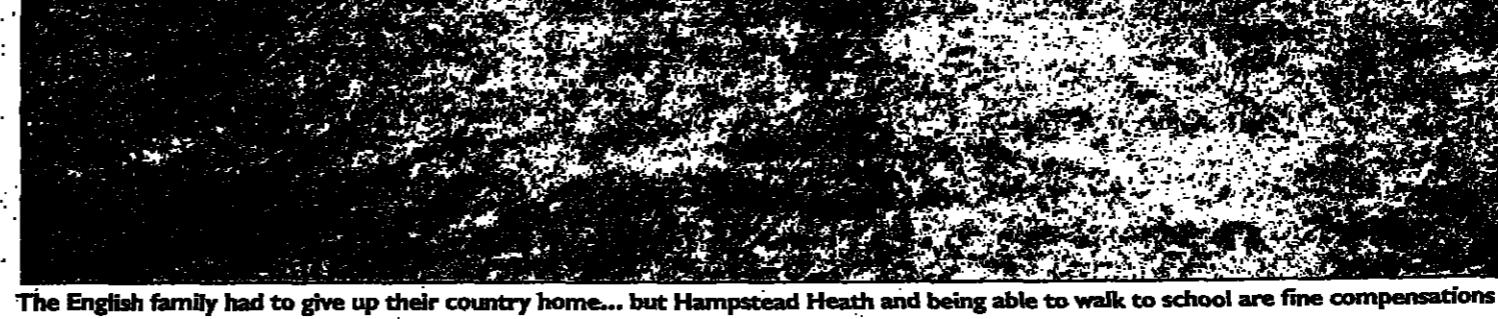
"The noise of the traffic does get to me, but we are lucky enough to be facing the Hampstead Heath extension, which helps. I now can walk to school with my children through the park. It takes only five minutes, and I reckon I have saved around five hours a day," says Mrs English.

Liz Newman, of Goldschmidt & Howlands Hampstead office, which sold the house to the Englishes, says: "We get quite a number of people moving to Hampstead to get closer to the schools. I have one woman, who lives in Kensington, west London, looking at the moment. Her children go to school in Hampstead, and she is fed up with sitting in the car all day."

Tony Mullucks, of Mullucks, Wells & Associates in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, says: "I have just sold a house on the east side of town, near the Hertfordshire & Essex High School, because it was so close to the school. It is in a no through road, so it is quite safe for children to walk to school every day."

"That means that if there are after-school activities, or sports on Saturday morning, the parents don't have to ferry them back and forth. And if they start at school at 11 years old and then go on to Cambridge, perhaps, the family knows it can be settled in one house for at least 10 years, as the station is close by, too," says Mr Mullucks.

Properties close to a school tend to be about 10 per cent more expensive than



The English family had to give up their country home... but Hampstead Heath and being able to walk to school are fine compensations

Kalpesh Ladha

equivalent houses that are less conveniently placed, but parents are often happy to pay the extra price for their freedom. At the other side of the town, the same situation applies to houses near Bishop Stortford College.

"Any house within walking distance carries a premium" says Tony Mullucks, "and I can see that premium increasing as roads become more congested". The agent is selling two new five-bedroom houses close to the college, the playing fields and the primary school for £35,000 each.

Families are moving into Guildford, Surrey, too, if their children go to one of the several excellent schools in the city.

"I recently sold a five-bedroom modern house in Tormead Road to a family who had lived in Dorking. They wanted to move to Guildford to escape the previously lengthy school run taking their child to the High School," says Keith Remington, of Curchords.

The agent has a five-bedroom Thirties house in Grove Road, within walking distance of most of the Guildford schools, on the market for £20,000.

And in Ipswich, the same inward movement is occurring. Bidwells has been retained to find a client a substantial house, with one main proviso - that it be no more than 15 minutes away from

Woodbridge School, which his children are attending.

"More clients are making it clear that they will view only properties that are a short distance from the local school," says Guy Jenkinson, of Bidwells.

Paul Greenwood, managing director of Stacks Relocation, often sees parents buy a home in a second-choice area because of the school run. "Purchasers often put journey time from school as a top priority when property-hunting."

"Houses within five miles of good schools are in great demand, and sell for a significant premium, but they may also come up for sale more often. Turnover is

higher, as the home may be sold for something more suitable in a different location once the children have left school."

He suggests that it is worth practising the school run, in both directions, at the appropriate time both morning and afternoon before committing yourself to a property. "Traffic patterns may be such that a property that is farther away may in fact be better in terms of travel time, which is the crucial factor," he says.

Goldschmidt & Howlands, 0171-435 4404; Mullucks Wells & Associates, 01279 755400; Stacks Relocation, 0166 860523; Curchords, 01932 874488; Bidwells, 0123 841841.

Why a bad job can give you a shock

Having faith in your workmen is all well and good, but sometimes it is misplaced, as Clare and Audrey found to their horror. Penny Jackson finds out why

Two weeks ago, Audrey Chaussin, working as an au pair in London, was lucky not to have been killed while taking a shower. As she stepped into a running bath she reached out for the shower attachment. At once her whole body started shaking. She managed to turn off the tap before dropping the shower and clambering out of the bath.

Since she was alone in the house her first thought was to call her mother in France. "I was very frightened. I thought I was ill," recalls Ms Chaussin. "But when I described to my mother what had happened she suggested that it could be an electric shock. The washing machine and dryer are both in the bathroom and it was the first time I had taken a shower while they were working."

By contrast, it was quite usual for her employer, Clare Wessely, to get up early and put on the washing machine before showering. "I had felt tingling on and off for a long time and it had got worse over the past few months. But nobody else felt it, so I put it down to static and assumed it was just me. As soon as Audrey told us what had happened we had everything checked. It is terrifying to think what might have happened," says Mrs Wessely.

The electrician who was called in discovered that the washing machine had not been earthed and was also on a single wire, not a ring main. "It was lethal," he says. "The electric current was being carried through the water pipes and it could easily have caused a fatal accident. The workmanship



Audrey Chaussin got more than she bargained for when she tried to take a shower: a powerful electric shock that could have proved fatal

Photograph:
Neville Elder

The electrician charged had connected the live pin in a central heating programmer to the earth in the junction box, which resulted in the radiators and pipework in the house being live. In another case, in which a teenager was electrocuted by a faulty power shower, it was not possible to trace the person responsible.

The evidence of negligence can sometimes take years to manifest itself and this can be a problem when it comes to providing evidence in the courts. But where a company or a person is clearly putting lives at risk, the Health and Safety Executive will make strenuous efforts to seek the offender.

"We might liaise with the local authority and the police and in the past have gone to great lengths to track people down," says Mark Wheeler of the HSE. "It is difficult to pursue when companies go out of business but individuals cannot change their status. The regulations covering electrical work are very specific. Where a professional job is being done, the home becomes the work place so that if a builder, say, is putting in a loft extension the house is in effect a construction site."

There is plenty of evidence that most people have great faith in the skill of others, especially in areas of which they themselves know little. But according to Clare Wessely's electrician, we should all be more cautious. "I have seen some terrible jobs. It is better to get it checked by someone else than live with doubts. It could have been much worse for the young French girl."

"We realised right from the beginning that the electrician was a disaster. He put in a transformer the size of a house and successive electricians have commented that it should be in a museum," says Clare Wessely.

The family is by no means alone in finding that the person or company responsible for sub-standard work is no longer

accountable. But, if someone is doing a job in a dangerous manner, it cannot be shrugged off. So where to start?

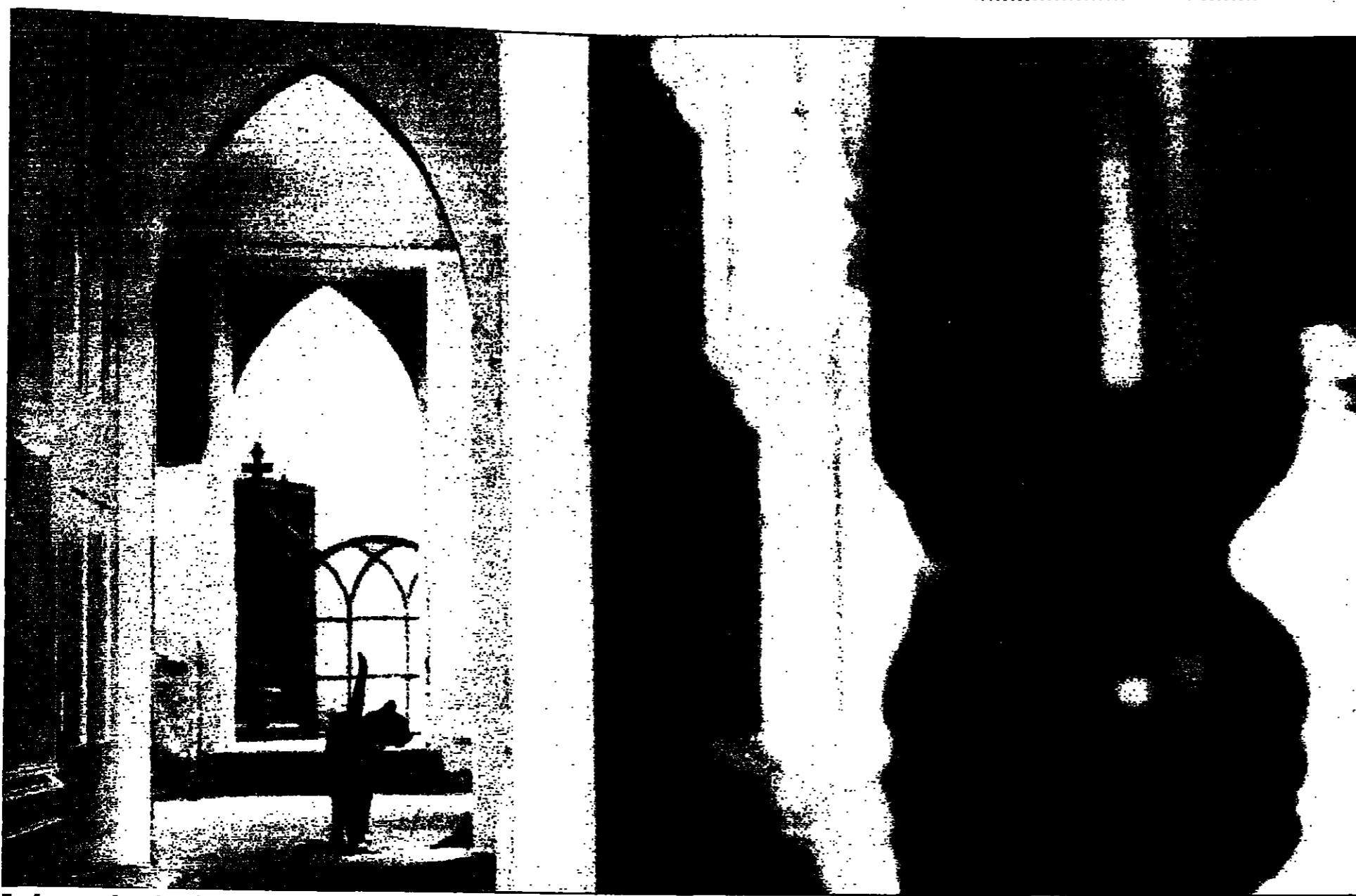
If an architect has been involved, it might be tempting to place the responsibility there. Tony Chapman of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), says that the architect does bear some responsibility if he signs work off. An architect

must ensure that craftsmen he or she recommends or appoints are fully qualified and that certificates are issued as to the quality of the work. This is in effect self-certification since architects cannot check every pipe or bit of wiring. Qualifications should guarantee a good standard of workmanship.

In the gas installing business Corgi registration has been

tightened up. Last month an identity card scheme was launched so that at a glance customers can check the credentials and areas of competence of the operative. The nearest equivalent in the electrical world is the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICIEC) but unlike Corgi registration it is not required under law.

However, the NICIEC and the Institute of Electrical Engineers do provide some redress if one of their members is guilty of sub-standard work. Poor workmanship was used for the first time in a charge of manslaughter after a young father was killed by an electric shock from a sink when a central heating system was wrongly wired.



Far from purrfect, there is plenty of work for Duncan and Mariana in their rambling, Victorian house, which they didn't count on falling in love with

Photograph: Neville Elder

To make a killing put your life on hold

Renovating can add plenty of value to your property. But, as Fiona Brandhorst discovered, it means work, work and more work

"No pain, no gain" is little consolation if you're up to your neck in sweat and tears renovating a property. While some people manage to make vast fortunes on a house without so much as changing a light switch, others are more dedicated, spending months or even years restoring a house before casting in on their investment.

Buying a rambling, unmodernised Victorian semi "as Grandma left it" was something Duncan Benge and Mariana Hardcastle vowed they'd never

do again, but Duncan is the first to admit that their second foray into the world of renovation was purely "motivated by money". They paid £134,000 for their house last summer just as the property market in south London was coming out of its nosedive. Similar properties now cost at around £250,000.

"We reckoned we needed to spend £60,000 on the renovations and we only had half of that," says Duncan. They agreed that most of the shortfall would be spent on labour so it made sense for Duncan to take a year's sabbatical from his business, sourcing antique furniture, to do as much of the work he could himself. Mariana, meanwhile, continued her job as an estate agent.

Having sold their flat quickly, they had to live apart with friends for four months while the electrics, plumbing, central heating and roof were renewed. Duncan worked around and sometimes with the professionals. "The plumber

was employed on a day rate," says Duncan. "I didn't want him to waste time going off to the builders' merchant for parts so I gave me the list instead. I figured if I was around working all the time, they'd have to do the same."

Duncan and Mariana lived in one room when they moved in together with the "demolition site" around them. They didn't bother with a plan of action, the task was too big. They'd even taken a gamble on not having a full structural survey, relying instead on the "unofficial" advice of an architect friend that there was "not a lot wrong" with the house.

Duncan started decorating at the top of the house and is slowly working his way down. It took him three weeks to install the new kitchen from a "stack of boxes and various plans" only to find the ceiling had succumbed to damp from the room above and fallen in one morning at 4am. "It's still down, I can't face it," he adds.

Moving on has never been a problem for Larry Griffiths, national sales manager for a gas

company, and his wife Hazel, whose first renovating challenge came when they sold their clone estate house in 1980 on the outskirts of Peterborough to buy a five-bedroom Victorian detached house.

The house had ancient wiring, no damp-proof course and a "mild sick" roof where the tiles were just sliding off like sheet rain. Eighteen months and several large tins of emulsion later, they moved on again, with a sizeable deposit, to a sprawling 1920s bungalow. Intact with period features, including plaster swallows round the ceilings, it was so "unfashionable" at the time that it was practically given away.

Larry, 47, a former gas fitter, tackles most of the renovation work himself and when he can't, he always knows a man who can. Yet no one could rescue Larry and Hazel from the only bad property move they have made. Initially, they were delighted with the tiny terraced cottage that cost "peanuts".

However, it didn't take long to find that their bedroom window had a fine view of an abattoir. Three days a week the street was awash with blood. "The rats were the size of cats," remembers Larry. "Apparently it was all the protein going down the drains." They resold it, fully renovated, on a quiet day at the abattoir.

Larry and Hazel have spent the past three years restoring a Grade II-listed farmhouse. "The rules and regulations have nearly killed me," comments Larry, "all the work has had to be inspected, but I've learned so much."

Making money is the motivation, but do personal relationships suffer as weekends are spent stripping and sanding? "You have to have the same vision," says Larry, "or you'd be walking down divorce street very quickly."

Duncan Benge would use the profit he hopes to make to have an easier life. "Next time, we'll have the money to pay someone to do it for us."

How to find your 'fairy castle'

The market is wising up to the fact that gays sometimes have different requirements when it comes to finding a property.

By Robert Liebman

Gay districts are out of the closet. Miller Homes is promoting a new development of flats and houses with a boat that is located near Manchester's gay village and the city centre. A firm of independent financial advisers (IFAs) in Oxford advertises in the gay press, highlighting the words "pride" and "prejudice" in pink.

Phil Carrosso, a London-based IFA, advertises his services with a photograph showing two bare-chested men with nothing between them but a rose. "We gays have special needs, life styles, fears and concerns," says Mr Carrosso, "and a financial adviser should be able to understand them." The list of fears is obviously topped by HIV and Aids - and insurers and lenders who prey into personal matters.

"Also, consider the uncertainty of gay relationships," Mr Carrosso suggests. "We have a habit of jumping ship fairly often. You need to have a portable solution to mortgage problems."

He suspects that most straight IFAs don't want to communicate with gays and wouldn't be able to do so if they tried. "With a gay broker, you can talk openly and mention risk factors on a sympathetic and understanding basis. My clients can be pierced or shaved, and they don't get the tongue-in-cheek attitude, as with a straight adviser."

Gay IFAs can also work financial wonders that are denied to their straight counterparts. Mr Carrosso did indeed get a better mortgage for David and Marco, who were renting an attic flat complete with roof garden in north London.

"We tried to buy the flat so that we could open it out and make it loft-like," says David. "The landlord refused to sell, so we decided to buy."

Location was one of several strict conditions, he explains: "It had to be near Islington, where Marco runs a flower shop. It had to have a lot of light, and not be a Victorian terrace, which we find uninteresting. It had to have a roof terrace." Marco's passion is plants.

They found a converted office block, made an offer, and were promptly gazumped. "That was on a Saturday. We made the rounds of estate agents, picked up particulars, drove around on Sunday and viewed the buildings from the outside," says David, who is finance co-ordinator with Rubber Stuffers, a charity dedicated to HIV prevention.

Of the seven flats in the block, only one had the necessary condition of being attached to the roof. They made an immediate offer, and are hoping to complete a week after exchanging contracts.

A proud Mr Carrosso proclaims that "David and Marco found a queen's paradise. Everyone is looking for fairy castles, unusual properties. It's not that easy in London."

Gay communities are prominent in Brighton, Bath, Bristol and Manchester and, as gays know, in many other areas. "Obviously there are gay people everywhere," says Stephen Coote, publisher of the *Gay to Z Directory*. He thinks that his section of London is gay, "but I'm not sure if that is because it is a gay area, or because I know a lot of gays."

Mr Coote notes that "some letting agencies specialise in gay housing, and Switchboard, a voluntary organisation, provides safe flat-sharing. If someone is looking for or offering a flat share, Switchboard does discreet vetting before issuing details. Stonewall Housing Association also certainly considers security and discretion."

Gay men tend to regard London as too sprawling and diverse to allow any one particular area to be predominantly or recognisably gay. But gays clearly feel most at home in such areas as Brixton, Islington, Camden, Hampstead, Earl's Court, Soho and Richmond, and parts of Wimbledon, Stoke Newington and Rotherhithe.

If there is a trend, it seems to be less in "ghettoising" a specific location than in preferring certain types of housing, namely converted warehouses and offices.

"The first problem is price. Rich gays go somewhere stylish, like a loft area," says Mr Coote. "And many are rich simply because they have two incomes and no children."

Julia Shelley, director of Stonewall Housing Association, insists that "not all gays and lesbians are affluent with high disposable incomes, and we provide for gay homeless who don't have resources." She agrees that "one part of the property market that is successfully targeting the pink pound is warehouse conversions."

"The gay mentality," says Philip Carrosso, "is always looking for something different, something to create. The artistic flair leads us to these different properties."

Carrosso and Company, 0500 778860; Stonewall, 0171-359 5767; Gay to Z, 0171-793 7450; London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, 0171-837 7324.



Room at the top: David and his partner were determined to find somewhere with a roof terrace, as Marco's passion is plants. Phil Carrosso helped them find the ideal flat

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

PENNY JACKSON

Why sad hotels could spark a smile

This could be a good time to seek out those shabby, down-at-heels London streets where the odd person can often be found sitting disconsolately on the steps of a once-smart house.

Budget hotels in places like South Kensington and Paddington have always stood out like sore thumbs and it is quite possible to walk from a smart, pricey street round the corner into another of peeling paintwork and a generally sad air.

For the residents of Courtfield Gardens in South Kensington this could all be about to change. Planning consent has been given to turn five small hotels into 33 luxury flats and they are being sold by Blenheim Bishop and Winkworth for about £9m.

But what is of real interest is the effect it will have on nearby homes. Christopher Roupell of Winkworth says the impact will be considerable. "Until recently prices were depressed by the presence of budget hotels but residents within the garden square may see the value of their property rise by up to 10 per cent and those living on the same terrace by as much as 20 per cent."

The story is similar in the Paddington area, already undergoing development. Owners of hostels and hotels are being tempted into selling to developers who are making generous offers, knowing that they can still see a healthy return on their investment.

Even though investors from the Far East are thin on the ground these days, the experts are a pretty demanding group. But not all of them are returning to the UK flush with funds.

Colin Mackenzie of Hamptons International, who deals mostly with buyers' inquiries, says that while those in banking and financial services can now afford large houses and even small estates, the civil engineer is being forced to sell. "The gravy train has stopped for them. The construction industry has come to a halt and Hong Kong airport is finished so they are returning without jobs and often decide now is the time to sell and rent instead."

The third category is the perennial expat who might be off to Japan or Singapore who wants an idyllic country cottage that can be used as family bolthole and a holiday let.

The Surrey estate of Sir Archibald Hamilton, the Conservative MP, is for sale for the first time in more than 100 years. The Snowdenham Estate, near Bramley, has been in Archie Hamilton's family since 1874.

The main house is 17th century, and according to FPD Savills, the selling agents, it is rare for a classic house with hundreds of acres of land so close to London to come on to the market.

The asking price is in excess of £4.25m.

Chic and cheerful

It's inexpensive, elegant and can go into the conservatory when you get a proper sofa. Rosalind Russell on wicker furniture

Wicker is a very obliging material. Furniture made from it tends to be cheaper than the sprung-interior sort. And when you have enough money to invest in some serious sofas, the wicker - or rattan, or bamboo - shuffles off dutifully into the garden or conservatory and takes on a new lease of life.

It also suits almost everyone's pocket and aspirations, from the pricey Marston & Langinger lounger, seen in all the classiest conservatories, to the astonishingly varied and very reasonably priced range from The Pier.

Marston & Langinger's collection, which definitely falls into the Old Rectory/small country mansion bracket, is made from English willow, handmade around a steel frame. The quality of the willow and the highly trained weavers account for their position at the top end of the market, according to the firm.

Thinner weave and inconsistent quality of rattan and wicker imported from abroad make rivals less durable. An M&L lounger costs £410 (more if painted) and the matching footstool is another £200. The cushions cost another £138 and £121, in a stripe or plain fabric respectively. The total is £869 (add £90 if your taste runs to a Racing Green or Duck Egg Blue paint finish).

More impoverished gents and ladies with shorter legs can buy a five-piece wicker suite in white from The Pier for £395, including cushions in turquoise. The set includes two armchairs, a sofa, coffee table and end table and would look just as smart in a first-time buyer's sitting room as in a sun lounge. The Pier also sells white-painted bedroom furniture - very girly, but pretty - which includes a single headboard at £85, an armoire at £395

and a nightstand at £85.

The Pier has also jazzed up wicker with strong colours in the form of a six-drawer storage chest. The frame is made of wood, while the drawers (either six, eight or four, depending on preference) are of wicker, painted orange, lime green, French blue and navy, just over 32 inches high: £125.

The range includes everything from a Chow Chair, in various colours, at £39, to a more formal and traditional hand-woven wicker and carved solid-wood sofa at £395, including cushions.

Ocean probably has the most chic, contemporary look in wicker and metal furniture. Low, streamlined and very Club Class airport lounge (the next look on from loft), the Lux has curvy arms with close-woven wicker side panels following the wave. The sofa is £495 plus £295 for cushions (a choice of five colours), £295 for the armchair (plus £95 for cushions) and £89 for a dining chair.

Most gardening catalogues now feature conservatory furniture too. In the Traditional Gardening Company's brochure, tucked between rotary scarifiers and rubber knee pads, are two styles of rattan furniture.

The high-backed President sofa costs £365 plus £79.95 for the cushion and the matching armchair is £225 plus £44.95. Just a bit cheaper is the Jakarta sofa at £325 plus £74.95 and matching chair at £179.95 plus £39.95.

Cheaper still, and cheerful, is the folding bamboo furniture from Windrush Mill. The table and chairs can be bought separately, or as a set for £195. They can be packed flat for storage when the sun stops shining.

If you are considering buying any wicker, rattan or bamboo furniture with a view to taking it to a second, or retirement, home abroad, take note.



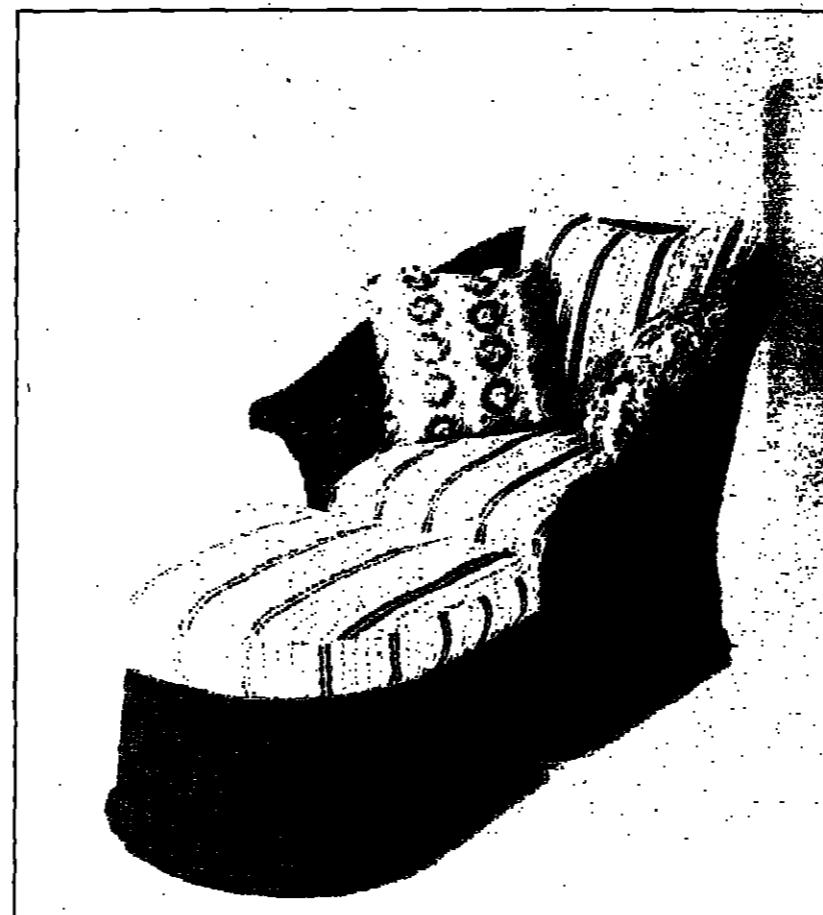
Ocean (above) has a chic look; Marston & Langinger (below) falls into the country mansion bracket

The British Association of Removers warns that some countries look on imported cane furniture with as much enthusiasm as Britain does on a suspected case of rabies.

Quarantine authorities may insist the furniture is fumigated at your expense, which is quite costly. The BAR is happy to advise on what may and may not be accepted in various countries.

The other drawback to wicker furniture - usually the looser-weave style - is that in central heating, it is prone to creak like an old set of corsets. Which can be quite disconcerting if you are in the room by yourself and the opposite chair sounds as though it has an unseen occupant. But it is a small price to pay for imagining yourself on a balmy hotel terrace in Goa with a gin, lime and soda in your hand.

Marston & Langinger 0171-8818; The Pier mail order 0171-314 5004; Ocean ordeline 0800 132 985; The Traditional Garden Company 0870 600 3366; Windrush Mill 01993 770456; British Association of Removers 0181-861 3331.

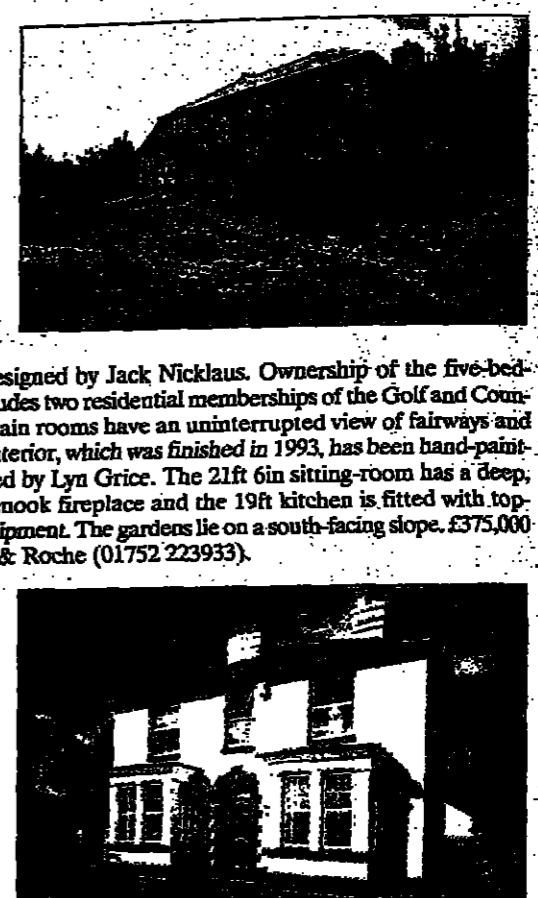


THREE TO VIEW: WITH SPORTY EXTRAS

There are no problems booking a squash court at peak times for the owners of The Dower House, near Ilminster in Somerset. The house comes with its own purpose-built squash court, with reception area, shower, cloakrooms and viewing balcony. The restored, thatched, 17th-century listed house also has four bedrooms, four reception rooms (with inglenook fireplaces in the drawing and sitting-rooms), a 17ft 6in kitchen with a walk-in pantry, and laundry and utility rooms. Outside, there is a greenhouse/conservatory and two large garden stores. The property stands in more than two acres of gardens and grounds. £450,000 through Greenslade Taylor Hunt (01460 57222).

It can take years to be accepted for membership of some golf clubs - but not for a buyer of 1 Oliver Court, which overlooks the St Mellion international golf-course in Cornwall, the first course in Britain to be designed by Jack Nicklaus. Ownership of the five-bedroom house includes two residential memberships of the Golf and Country Club. The main rooms have an uninterrupted view of fairways and parkland. The interior, which was finished in 1993, has been hand-painted and decorated by Lyn Grice. The 21ft 6in sitting-room has a deep, slate-lined inglenook fireplace and the 19ft kitchen is fitted with top-of-the-range equipment. The gardens lie on a south-facing slope. £375,000 through Punch & Roche (01752 223933).

As May warms up and thoughts turn lightly to your own swimming-pool, free of leisure-centre-strength chlorine and other people's children, Wigate House near Faversham in Kent, may prove to be just the thing. The white-painted, detached Victorian house, in a quiet semi-rural area, has a heated pool in the garden. The three reception-room, four-bedroom property has a number of outbuildings, including a double garage with loft space above. And should enthusiasm for the pool pall, you can go for a ride instead: there is a timber stable block for three horses. The guide price is £275,000, through Strutt & Parker (01227 451123).



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